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CONTROL AND RESISTANCE: INDENTURED LABOR IN
SURINAME¹

Caribbean historiography has focused much attention upon the dominant socio-economic structure in the area, the plantation. Special emphasis has been placed on both the techniques used to control the labor force and the means by which the workers resisted such impositions. Most of this research has concentrated on slavery. Yet, after its abolition, in many colonies the plantation continued to dominate the socio-economic landscape. In the nineteenth century several types of labor regimes, including share cropping, wage labor, and indentured servitude, replaced slavery. In the Dutch colony of Suriname the planters resorted to contracting Asian immigrants to replace the ex-slaves. Although the composition of the labor force was changing, coercion still existed.

The purpose of this article is to examine the degree and quality of control exerted over indentured laborers in Suriname, and especially on its largest sugar plantation Marienburg during the period 1880-1940. During indentureship control over the contract laborers was exercised not only by the planters but also by the state. The labor contract specified the rights and duties of the worker, and government officials intervened when a breach of contract occurred. How did this judicial system function in Suriname?

This is followed by a discussion of the ways indentured workers opposed planter domination. Resistance took passive and active forms. The most frequent way of opposing the planter regime was through acts of non-cooperation such as 'neglect of duty' or illegal absences. Active resistance could take place alone or in a group. Could this active resistance, particularly mass uprisings, be considered as isolated conflicts or as a struggle radically to change the existing social structure, and how did the authorities react to such mass unrest?

INTRODUCTION

Marienburg, and its neighboring 'sister' plantation Zoelen, were both located in the district of Beneden-Commewijne and primarily cultivated sugar cane. In 1880 the Nederlandsche Handel-Maatschappij (NHM, the government-sponsored Dutch Trading Company) purchased Marienburg and soon it was by far the largest plantation and sugar mill in Suriname. The number of hectares under cultivation grew steadily from 108 in 1890 to a maximum of 2,600 hectares in 1933. The tons of cane processed rose accordingly from about 30,000 in 1890 to a top of 190,000 tons in 1932. The indentured labor force grew from 541 in 1890 to over 3,000 in 1930 (ARA, NHM archives; 1882-1939; on the use of indentured and free labor see Hoeft, 1987: chapter 6). In addition hundreds of wage laborers were employed each year. The following table indicates the growth of both the number of hectares under cultivation and the labor force at Marienburg from 1890 to 1930.

year	ha cult.	number immigrants	%	number other lab.	%	total
1890	479	606	68	283	32	889
1900	904	1630	62	1018	38	2648
1910	1086	2774	95	142	5	2916
1920	1174	3129	92	290	8	3419
1930	2223	4062	95	225	5	4287

Source: calculated from *Koloniale Verslagen*, relevant years

Indentured laborers replaced the ex-slaves after abolition in 1863 and the end of state supervision ten years later. The planters thought emancipation to be inevitable but were unprepared to accept the ex-slaves as independent people disposing of their own time. They were called 'lazy', 'work-shy' and 'unreliable'. In many Caribbean sugar colonies indentured labor from Asia, under governmental regulation and subsidy, formed the core of the labor force after emancipation. Almost two-thirds of these indentured immigrants were British Indians. Immigration of contract laborers seemed to be the means to provide Suriname with a new supply of workers and experiences in the British and French Caribbean suggested that India would be the most feasible place to recruit a new labor force for the plantations. Between 1873 and 1917, 34,304 British Indians were imported into Su-

riname. However, these immigrants remained subjects of Great Britain. Had Indian immigration proceeded at a continuous pace, a considerable proportion of the Surinamese population would soon have been British, with the possibility that they could appeal the decisions of the highest Dutch authority. Of course, this would not enhance the submissiveness of the labor force, especially since the British Indians were generally considered cantankerous and rebellious. Although the behavior of these immigrants was criticized, most planters agreed that large-scale agriculture in Suriname could not survive without indentured labor. However, increasing nationalism and an anti-emigration movement in India gave rise to the fear that Suriname would be deprived of new increments to its labor force if emigration were abolished. In 1917 indentured emigration from India was indeed halted. However, by that time the planters already had tapped a new source of labor: the Dutch East Indies. Since the 1880s the estate-owners increasingly supported immigration from Java. From 1890 to 1940 a total of 32,956 Javanese came to Suriname. After World War I it became obvious that contract labor was on its last legs. Around 1930 the governments in both the Netherlands and Suriname steered the course away from immigration on behalf of the plantations and more in the direction of immigration of free laborers and colonization. Immigration now took place under civil law with a modified penal sanction. These migrants had signed contracts with the Suriname government and were put to work on the plantations. The three-year agreement could be broken unilaterally by the employee if he wished to establish himself as a free laborer. The district commissioner (DC) had to judge if the immigrant was 'ready' to settle independently. The introduction of the Javanese added a unique ethnic and cultural element to the already richly-chequered population structure of the Caribbean.

CONTROL

Unlike slave owners, the planters did not legally own the indentured laborers. However, their control over the contractants was much more extensive than over free workers. The first and most obvious way of dominating the indentured workers was through the labor contract itself. More subtle means of control included the isolation of workers on plantations through a pass system. Only with the approval of the director, who had to issue the pass, could a worker leave the plantation. When a dispute arose between management and workers, and the latter exercised their right to complain at the office of the DC, the management usually

would not give out more than three passes at a time, thus preventing a mass exodus from the estate. In addition, the planters used non-institutionalized forms of control, such as psychological intimidation or preferential treatment in attempts to prevent the growth of worker solidarity. The planters, moreover, attempted to divide the labor force by emphasizing ethnic and occupational differences. Some people were chosen from the ranks of the laborers to control their compatriots, yet they could also easily be degraded back to their former lowly positions if their performance was not satisfactory.

The law forced the indentured laborer to place his labor power at the unqualified disposal of his employer at specified times. The contract placed the worker under stringent social and disciplinary control. The so-called penal sanction made neglect of duty or refusal to work punishable by jail sentences. This allowed the planters to impose their ideas of work discipline. After emancipation the right 'formally' to sentence or punish a laborer was transferred from the employer to the state, whose role changed in the wake of abolition.² The Agent General (AG) was to supervise and control the contract laborers. In the districts the DCs were the executive officers in charge of administration and routine supervision. Before judicial proceedings took place a state official had to hold a preliminary inquiry. In case of breach of contract the DC first had to investigate the accusation and to sanction the charge before it could be taken to court.

In the district of Beneden-Commewijne, court was held at Marienburg as often as was necessary. One of the rooms of the school served as court room. The DC, a clerk and an itinerant judge were seated behind a fence, while two benches were reserved for witnesses and audience. Most of the time the witnesses were planters, overseers, and drivers. Justice was dispensed in the 'European' way, adhering to European values and enforcing the rules of the owners. Native customs and traditions of the immigrants were frequently ignored. An additional disadvantage for the indentureds were the language difficulties because interpreters were often not reliable. Moreover, the antiquated penal legislation posed jurisdictional problems. The last major changes in Surinamese law were made in 1869, although the Dutch legislation had been modernized since then. The older legislation dictated minimum penalties which often were considered excessively harsh (also McNeill and Lal 1915: 157). As a result the magistrates frequently advanced extenuating circumstances to lower the penalties. The planters did not approve of this method since it lowered the prestige of both the law and the judge. Plantation authorities often complained about the light sentences and urged a return to the corporal punishment of the slave era (SSM 4 Marienburg 3-10-1891, no. 241; ARA, NHM, BB 1148-9185, 1917).

However, the government in the Netherlands upheld the independent power of the courts and strongly opposed such measures.

Convicts were usually sentenced to hard labor or were allowed to choose between a fine and hard labor. Immediately after the sentence was passed the culprits were taken to jail. The planters claimed that the indentureds enjoyed their time in prison as 'a vacation to recuperate from arduous labor'.³ Another sore point was the quality of the prison wardens. According to the planters the guards were more afraid of the prisoners than vice versa. The wardens were even accused of being *frères et compagnons* with the convicts, who supposedly liked jail so much that they often did not seize opportunities to escape. Break-outs, however, did occur, also at Marienburg. The doubts of the planters concerning the ability of the wardens also applied to the police, who were accused of disturbing the peace.⁴ The management preferred to rely on the arms bought for supervisory personnel and a sort of internal plantation guard. In light of the 'communist danger' and leftist political agitation in the 1930s the NHM strengthened its internal security system and requested that a larger permanent police force be stationed at Marienburg.

For the year 1898 data are available about justice meted out at Marienburg.⁵ A total of 742 persons were convicted, while 64 were acquitted. The most common offences were: unwillingness to work (47%), laziness (18%), assaulting another person (9%), theft (6%), and desertion (5%). Other punishments were meted out for drunkenness, cursing, and murder threats.⁶ At Marienburg in 1898 the punishments for assault varied from a minimum of one day hard labor or a fifty cents fine to four months hard labor. More than half of this group of offenders received three to seven days. Of course, heavier punishments were meted out when the victim was gravely wounded. Theft was punished with at least two days or a one-guilder fine. The highest penalty given was six months hard labor. Almost three-fourths of the convicts were sentenced to two weeks or more hard labor.

Marienburg had a bad reputation with regard to criminality. Poverty accounted for many offences against property and theft of crops. Yet, for the ten-year period 1898-1908, the newspaper mentioned only twenty-two cases of theft at Marienburg. Most victims belonged to the same social class as the criminals (*Onze West* 1898-1908). Theft, then, should in the cases recorded here probably not be considered as an act of resistance.

The most obvious form of illegal absence was desertion. In 1898 penalties ranged from three days to three months hard labor. The majority of the deserters were sentenced to two weeks or less. According to the colonial reports a total of 227 British Indians fled the plantations in the period

1882-1916 (*Koloniaal Verslag* 1883-1917). In 1908 it was rumored in the capital Paramaribo that many indentureds abandoned the plantations. As will be shown below, this wave coincided with wage disputes and strikes on many plantations. The Governor requested figures on the exact number of deserters. Marienburg and Zoelen reported 18 and 17 respectively, which was considered an improvement over previous years. The management claimed that the rumors were unfounded for the laborers had been treated correctly. Running-away was considered a characteristic trait of contractants who preferred stealing to working.⁷ However, newspaper reports suggest that the stories about deserters were largely true. When the police started a *razzia* to round up runaways, several deserters were caught in a camp in the woods near Marienburg. The fugitives had planted corn and stolen chickens to support themselves. Other deserted 'maroon camps' were set on fire. The police authorities assumed, however, that most deserters did not live from stealing but worked on government settlements where they were hired by smallholders.⁸ In 1933 the Marienburg books showed a total of 354 deserters (SSM 28 Marienburg 4-10-1933, no. 398). However, in this period of economic crisis desertion was almost welcomed by the management and fugitives were no longer pursued.

In 1919 the Immigration Office sent an official complaint to the NHM: the company was acting too rashly and as a consequence too many complaints against contractants had to be withdrawn. For example, in that year 15 percent of the complaints against Javanese men and 32 percent of the ones against East Indian women were withdrawn. Marienburg was the only plantation in the district where complaints had to be withdrawn at all. Moreover, in comparison with other sugar plantations the number of complaints was highest at Marienburg.⁹ This suggests then that the Marienburg staff was harsher than elsewhere and tried to intimidate the contractants more.

For the years 1915-1930 data are available about the percentages of Marienburg contract laborers who absented themselves to see authorities, underwent punishment, or stayed away without permission. Since this period is at the end of British Indian contract labor at Marienburg, the data about Hindustani absences are not too meaningful. An average of 2.9 percent of Javanese men were imprisoned, while 0.6 percent of the East Indian women were jailed. On averages less than a half percent of Javanese men and women were away to meet officials. As far as illegal absences are concerned, the percentages greatly fluctuate: for Javanese men from 1.1 to 11.4 with a yearly average of 7.1 percent. Female absences ranged from 1.3 to 6.9, with an average of 3.7 percent. Thus Javanese male contract laborers were considerably more absent than their female

compatriots. Many planters complained about the simulation of illnesses by their workers. Of course, it is impossible to figure out how many patients were really sick and how many feigned an illness.

Under the labor laws for indentured immigrants, workers could be penalized for laziness or neglect of duty. For Suriname as a whole, the percentage of Hindustani convicted under the labor laws ranged from about 11 to 20 percent during 1885-1923, with an average of 15 percent. For Javanese contract laborers, the percentages of labor convictions averages at 16 percent, with a range of 10 to 21 percent.¹⁰ Thus, compared to the Hindustani, a higher percentage of Javanese was convicted. The British government officials McNeill and Chimmam Lal mention as well that the percentage of complaints against Javanese indentureds always has been higher, also because of their Dutch nationality (1915: 27). At Marienburg in 1898 penalties for neglect of duty varied from two days or one guilder fine to six weeks. In one-third of the cases the sentence was eight days hard labor. Laziness was punished with a minimum of two days or one guilder fine and a maximum of six days. In almost all cases the penalty was two or three days hard labor or the commensurate fine.

The indentured worker did have the right to take his employer to court when he thought that he was treated unfairly. It is doubtful, however, if the courts were objective in dealing with complaints of laborers against management, and willing to prosecute offending planters. Employers could not be sentenced to jail and were only fined when they were found guilty. McNeill and Chimmam Lal wrote that in 1910 'complaints against employers of excessive tasks rose very considerably. It seems clear that employers on the verge of bankruptcy had for a short time pressed their labourers unduly...' (1915: 157). As will be seen below, the years 1908 to 1910 were filled with protest against low wages and large tasks. In Suriname as a whole the percentage of contract laborers that officially complained about their employers dropped during the time of indenture. In 1886 and 1887 2.2 percent of the Hindustani contractants took their employers to court, but by 1918 this had levelled off to almost nil. This seems to be true also for Javanese indentureds (*Koloniaal Verslag* relevant years). It is unfortunately not possible to compare the percentages of Hindustani and Javanese complaints for a significant number of years in order to see if both groups were 'officially' dissatisfied in the same years or if this varied.

ACTIVE RESISTANCE

Active resistance ranged from individual acts of violence to sporadic outbreaks of mass rebellion on the estate. Lone acts of resistance included arson, sabotage, destruction of crops and/or fields, and physical attacks on supervisory personnel. According to Sandew Hira, arson, a classic form of protest during slavery, occurred several times during the first years of indentured immigration (Hira 1983: 196). The only time arson was mentioned at Marienburg was in 1899, when a Hindustani set part of the cane field on fire. Several hectares were lost and the railway was damaged because the sleepers were burnt. Other forms of sabotage included obstructing the train, as Hindustani women did by laying a chain on the track in 1897, or the destruction of canefields.¹¹

The Javanese anthropologist Parsudi Suparlan notes that the Javanese contractants in particular sometimes protested by assaulting their superiors, but most often did not do anything at all and resorted to *mutung* (sulking) (Suparlan 1976: 133). Such personal attacks were directed against identifiable members of the plantation hierarchy, primarily overseers and drivers. These supervisors were most closely in contact with the laborers. The workers despised them and frequently accused them of thievery, physical violence and blackmail (Hoefte 1987: chapter 7; Rodney 1981: 157). Reports of attempted murders on personnel of all races appeared rather frequently. At Marienburg six such attacks were recorded, and thrice the victim lost his life. In 1905 the Javanese *mandur* (driver) Kodo was killed by three compatriots. One of the attackers recently had been fired as watchman, for which he blamed Kodo. In 1924 the overseer Del Prado was wounded by a Javanese and a year later his colleague Van der Pijl died as a result of grievous bodily harm inflicted by an East Indian. In 1929 the British Indian Mula assaulted the Dutch engineer Saeys while in 1935 another engineer, Mansanto, was wounded in an attack by a seventeen-year old British Indian.¹² The most spectacular attack occurred in 1902, and will be described below.

Although some of these incidents led to loss of lives, they were minor compared to the difficulties the Marienburg management sometimes faced. In the period under study the plantation experienced mass unrest at least six times, in 1884, 1891, 1902, 1908, 1925 and 1932. Sometimes the rebellious spirit manifested itself only at Marienburg as in 1925, while at other times more estates were threatened by violent protests. Minor incidents could assume serious proportions due to the overreaction of plantation directors and police, thus provoking clashes with the workers who rallied behind their leaders. In the thirty-year period from the beginning of British Indian

immigration to 1902, fifteen major rebellions broke out in Suriname (Hira 1983: 196-215). Nine of these occurred at sugar plantations, where most workers were concentrated and labor was most arduous. The revolts at Marienburg and Zoelen illuminate the relationship between workers, management, and the state. The most massive outbreak of violence took place at Marienburg in 1902. It was the last major violent clash between plantation laborers and state authorities until the 1930s when general labor protests again stirred grave unrest.

In 1884 trouble for the first time arose at Zoelen. The workers demanded higher wages and the director could not settle the matter. He then called in the DC, who ordered the laborers back to work. Thereupon the workers attacked and wounded the DC, his secretary, and the director. The DC was escorted by unarmed policemen who took to flight as soon as the British Indians started their assault. Order was restored after the military, called in from Fort Nieuw Amsterdam, arrested nineteen rebels.¹³

Unrest at the plantations Zoelen and Geertruidenberg broke out during the *Tadja* celebrations in 1891. The most popular festival of the British Indian moslems was Muharram *Tadja* to commemorate Hassan and Hossein. The highpoint was the procession in which groups competed with each other for the most beautiful *tadja*, a temple constructed from paper and bamboo which was later thrown into the river. In 1891 several different groups from the plantations Geertruidenberg, Marienburg and Zoelen fought over the right of way during the procession. Calm was soon restored but the arrival of the authorities stirred things up again. What started as a fight between contract laborers ended in resistance to state authorities. In a letter to the Governor, NHM director Van der Geijt accused the DC and the Attorney General of misgovernment and the murder of innocent people. The Attorney General appeared in the company of twenty soldiers at Geertruidenberg. He apparently wanted to solve the affair the very same day at an extraordinary court session at Marienburg. The first mistake was to take the Geertruidenberg people to Zoelen to confront the two hostile parties. The second fault was to have six armed policemen take the defendants to court. The latter, of course, believed that they were being arrested. This display of power was absolutely unnecessary, since there had been no resistance against the state. According to the official version, the passive resistance of the other Hindustani soon ceased and objects were thrown at the Attorney General. He decided to free the prisoners, but this did not satisfy the workers. Shots were fired and four men were killed. Yet, according to Findlay, acting director of Zoelen and an eye-witness, the sequence of events was different. The police used their rifle butts to drive back the workers, who then started throwing lumps

of clay. Only after the shooting were the prisoners freed.¹⁴ The feelings of dismay and alarm were further strengthened when it was rumored that the government was planning to send a warship to Zoelen. Many contract laborers who feared the worst took their families and escaped into the surrounding forest. Only when the director guaranteed their safety were they willing to return to Zoelen.

In the following months many planters suffered from unrest among the indentureds. The director of Jagtlust was killed and other threats of murder were common. A British Indian at Zoelen, convicted for desertion, so threatened the English consul in front of the DC, and the directors of Marienburg and Zoelen (SSM 4 Marienburg 3-10-1891, no. 214). As a result, the management at Marienburg decided to arm the overseers with revolvers. About thirty plantation directors and managers sent a delegation to the Governor to request the death sentence for the murderer of the Jagtlust director, and the institution of corporal punishment. The Governor gave the order to quickly dispatch criminal cases but for the rest told the planters that they had overreacted to the situation. That was easy for the Governor to say, as he was safe in Paramaribo, but at the plantations the situation seemed threatening indeed. In a short time at least four murders took place (SSM 4 Marienburg 23-11-1891, no. 218). The planters feared the worst and the police force in the districts was strengthened. The expected outburst of mass violence did not take place, but the planters had used the real or imaginary danger to strengthen white supremacy.

Eleven years later, however, Suriname was shocked by the bloodiest revolt of contract laborers in its history. Violent riots at the sugar plantations Alliance and Marienburg took place within a few weeks. In 1902 after the director of Alliance had left temporarily for Europe, his substitute lowered wages. This action caused unrest among the workers and on Saturday June 28 they struck. One hundred British Indians and thirty-seven Javanese left without permission to see the DC of Frederiksdorp. Alliance fell under the jurisdiction of the DC of Ephrata, but apparently the protesters mistrusted and bypassed him. At Frederiksdorp the workers complained about the excessive work load, the low wages, and the tyrannical Hindustani overseer Abdoolah. The DC advised them to return to Alliance and resume labor, which the protesters promised to do, and as an act of faith even agreed to turn in their axes to the DC.

When the men returned to Alliance at 11 a.m. they met the DC of Ephrata, accompanied by an interpreter and two policemen, who were to start an investigation. The leading rebel was arrested which caused the other laborers to become unruly. When the prisoner was not freed, the workers started throwing stones and bottles. The DC ordered the police

to fire six revolver shots and to release the prisoner. The DC tried to flee but was soon found by the enraged contractants. He and the rest of his group were all wounded by the protesters. The DC of Ephrata was happy to leave the plantation alive and only with the arrival of his colleague from Frederiksdorp at 4 p.m. did some semblance of peace return to the estate. Later that evening the Attorney General and Agent General arrived with a detachment of army and police, but the DC convinced them not to provoke the indentureds and to spend the night at a neighboring plantation. An investigation by the Attorney General and the DC of Frederiksdorp during the next two days indicted one Javanese and sixteen British Indians; each was sentenced to six months hard labor. Yet, the strike had some success as the temporary director was replaced and wages were raised.¹⁵

Three weeks later the workers at Marienburg rose in revolt.¹⁶ According to the official colonial report it was again a wage question that had started the troubles. All attempts by the Agent General and the DC of Beneden-Commewijne to raise the daily payments had been futile. Later the authorities discovered that the unsatisfactory wage situation was aggravated by other problems such as the preferential treatment given to some immigrant families, bad choices of overseers, and insufficient control over the drivers.

The explosion took place on July 27, when a gang of cane cutters refused to perform their tasks because they considered their pay inadequate. Their overseer informed director Mavor of the problems and wage demands. Mavor agreed, by messenger, to pay a bit extra per bank, but this proposal was rejected. The laborers decided to talk to Mavor himself and marched in orderly fashion to his office. Mavor agreed to come to the fields himself. Three hours later he came out on horseback to inspect the work.¹⁷ He promised another small raise, which again was rejected. The workers requested to see the DC and three of them were granted a pass to leave the estate. When Mavor began to leave the field some Hindustani started to throw cane and to follow him. The accompanying overseers were also attacked. Mavor jumped on his horse and speeded away, followed by his overseers in a train and two hundred raging indentureds shouting 'mara! mara!' (hit, hit). Mavor arrived at his office, called for help, and left for the sugar mill. The other director, Welle, took his horse to request police assistance from the station at nearby Belwaarde. The steadily growing mass of people cut the phone poles and attacked the office and plantation shop. Discovering that Mavor was hiding in the factory, they invaded that building, destroying everything in their way and killing the director.

Again the DC of Frederiksdorp, the Attorney General, Agent General,

thirty policemen, and army personnel (126 men) arrived, to find peace largely restored. Several British Indians and one Javanese were arrested as the main agitators. A great number of indentureds armed with tools gathered in front of the bridge connecting office and factory, calling for the release of the arrested. A lieutenant and ten soldiers were ordered to keep the masses off the bridge, which seemed an impossible task. Five times the crowd was ordered to disperse. This only provoked booing and mounting pressure on the military. The Attorney General gave permission to fire, resulting in the death of seventeen British Indians and thirty-nine wounded, seven of whom later died.¹⁸ The volley dispersed the crowd and on the 31st work was resumed. The body of Mavor and the wounded protesters were transported simultaneously to Paramaribo. The strange procession attracted much attention; the spectators shouted things like 'beasts, villains, bloodhounds, murderers' (Library SSM 81/44 II).

The trial of the twenty-one Hindustani and one Javanese accused of the premeditated murder of Mavor lasted four days. Five interpreters were necessary-Hindu, French, Surinamese, Chinese, and Javanese- and nineteen witnesses were heard. All twenty-two defendants denied the charge. The accused incriminated each other and agreed only about the arrival of Mavor and the reason for the murder: money. Most witnesses agreed that wages indeed had been low during the last few years. Administrative director Welle stated that Mavor knew that something was brewing among the indentureds. Welle claimed not to know if wages indeed had been lowered, since such things belonged to Mavor's authority. Only the overseer involved stated that wages had not been reduced. Mavor had offered more to the protesting cane cutters because of the heaviness of the cane.¹⁹ It was impossible to single out the chief offenders and the accusation of premeditated murder could not be upheld. Thirteen men were acquitted and eight Hindustani were sentenced to twelve years hard labor (*Onze West* 8-11-1902, no. 323).

The violent incident at Marienburg had some after-effect in the colony itself and in the Netherlands where it led to questions in the Second Chamber of the Dutch Parliament. Colonial Minister Idenburg again stated bluntly that the abuses by the managements at Alliance and Marienburg had led to the revolts (SG 1902-1903 33e verg, 24-12-1902). The testimony of official sources - the colonial report and the ministerial answers - proved a remarkable admission of maltreatment on some estates. The NHM, however, attributed the revolt to other causes. In a reference to the official documents, the NHM report denied that the violence of the indentureds was caused by the 'supposed' cutback in wages. The NHM version of the uprising stated that everybody who had experienced the revolt could

testify that the malcontents vented their rage at everyone in the plantation hierarchy. Mavor only became the victim because he had had the courage to meet the agitators, relying on his great authority among the workers.²⁰ According to the NHM the proof that the revolt was not caused by the cutback in wages came later when some jobs were paid better and the mood among the immigrants did not improve at all. The unrest was blamed on some ill-disposed British Indians who had come from Demerara. The management planned to prevent future violence by purchasing twenty-five guns and requesting the colonial administration to station a police detachment at Marienburg. According to the directors, the colonial government rejected the request because it mistakenly believed that the wage issue was the root of all evil. Instead of sending police, the government appointed a commission to consider whether the wage and task system needed change (ARA, NHM T 1133-9185, 1902).

These incidents demonstrate that strikes frequently got out of hand, resulting in confrontations between workers on the one side and plantation management, army, and police on the other. An exception to this rule was the labor unrest that started in May 1908. At Marienburg about seventy British Indians complained to the DC about their wages and especially the behavior of their superiors. The overseers forced the workers to finish excessively large tasks. The Hindustani demanded that two supervisors be fired. According to the indentureds, the DC did not show enough interest in their case and ninety men crossed the river to Paramaribo to complain to the Agent General. The next day the AG and three government experts visited Marienburg to hear the grievances and inspect the work routine. The commission disagreed with the workers. However, the AG ordered the DC to hold an inquiry about the functioning of the supervisors and the spirit among the indentureds. An 'independent' person was to visit and inspect the estate on any given day. Although the management was pleased by the outcome of the wage dispute, it protested the latter arrangement as undermining the authority of the personnel for it expected the British Indians to air numerous complaints (SSM 7 Marienburg 16-5-1908, no. 504).

A protest at Zoelen, where the diggers demanded more money, followed this strike. The DC sent them back to work, but the NHM asked the AG for stronger measures to prevent such walk-outs (SSM 7 Marienburg 3-6-1908, no. 505). Unrest dominated the month of June. Again a group of Hindustani left the plantation to complain to the AG and the English consul. The AG deported three leaders to the western district of Nickerie (SSM 7 Marienburg 1-7-1908, no. 506). Even this more drastic measure did not stop the protests and the AG proposed a new task and wage

system, which most planters ignored. This only increased the unrest among the indentureds. At the same time, the Marienburg management was unhappy with the actions of the Immigration Department and a conflict ensued. The result was that the authorities acted more severely. A strike in October led to the arrest of thirty Hindustani who had gone to the DC without permission.²¹ The NHM agents contentedly reported that 'convicted coolies are severely punished, which makes us hope that the British Indians slowly will return to their proper place. Probably due to the rebellious atmosphere among the Indians in their homelands we noticed that the coolies of the last transport do not have the respect for authority which earlier immigrants possessed' (ARA, NHM U 1139-9185, 1908). Another eighty British Indians from Zoelen were convicted for willful absence and sedition. They had also gone without a pass to see the state authorities to complain about their wages. The widespread unrest of 1908, strikes and a wave of desertions, was blamed mainly on the rising wages on the banana plantations, which encouraged the sugar workers to demand a raise as well (SSM 7 Marienburg 27-7-1908, no. 508). Already in 1907 warnings had been given about discontent among British Indians at Marienburg in particular. The AG told the agents that unrest might secretly be brewing, even though the supervisors insisted that everything was all right (SSM 7 Marienburg 24-2-1908, no. 499). Afterward the planters attributed the restlessness to the fact that the Hindustani were encouraged by the assistance they received from the AG. This official was accused of being biased and not interested in finding out the truth. Furthermore, the situation in India was thought to make new indentured immigrants unruly and these newcomers incited the oldhands to mutiny. In contrast, Walter Rodney came to the conclusion that planters in British Guiana preferred new Indian immigrants because they were thought to be more compliant than more seasoned laborers. 'Whenever recent arrivals participated in a strike or riot, the administration deliberately played down their involvement by attributing it to inexperience. Conversely, immigrants of longer standing were accused of misleading their newly arrived countrymen' (Rodney 1981: 155).

Marienburg was once more the scene of violence and unrest in 1925. Of this rebellion an eye-witness account by a police officer exists. The trouble started when the British Indian policeman Dilmahomed and his brother Sarafaz tried to stop some Javanese from smuggling food into the hospital. Sarafaz fired a warning shot which hit a Javanese. A large group of East Indians wanted revenge and roamed the estate armed with bottles, axes, and sticks. They destroyed the house of Dilmahomed, who was not home at the time as police officer Dames had warned him in

time. The police could not calm the crowd and Dames fired two shots which injured two people. Thereupon, infuriated Javanese severely wounded the police officer. Meanwhile the DC, AG, and a detachment of army and police had arrived at Marienburg, and shots were again fired. The AG finally managed to quiet the Javanese down. About ten people were arrested and the next day the laborers struck in vain to demand the release of the prisoners. The soldiers stayed another ten days and the police force was expanded by four men, who were stationed near the hospital (SSM 21 Marienburg 6-6-1925, no. 104). Police officer Dames was, of course, a key witness when six Javanese stood trial. Dames declared that he had thought it strange that he had not received any assistance, even though the residences of the directors were located about 150 meters away. The even nearer houses of the overseers were closed and dark. Dames claimed that already several times the situation at the plantation had been tense and that personnel had been threatened repeatedly. The police officer therefore concluded that probably all overseers had been killed (*Suriname* 18-8-1925, no. 66). Even if exaggerated, such a statement expresses great fear about unrest among the workers, which could so easily erupt and have fatal consequences (see also Rodney 1981: 157).

In the 1930s political activity took wing in Suriname. The Great Depression, resulting in misery and vast unemployment, triggered active political protest. The dramatic high point took place in January and February 1933. On January 31 the Creole activist against imperialism and colonialism Anton de Kom was arrested. This sparked a week of riots in the capital which left two people dead and some thirty wounded. These events in Paramaribo are sufficiently known, but what happened on the plantations is less well known.

After the arrest of De Kom on January 31, the plantation authorities noticed that something was brewing among the workers, which expressed itself in remarkable silence during work, reluctance to answer questions and general rudeness and recalcitrance.²² The supporters of De Kom wanted to free him on February 7 and during the previous night many Javanese left several plantations to go to Paramaribo. Free and contract laborers at Marienburg left without notice, thus paralyzing the plantation. After their departure, the staff at Marienburg lived in great fear since one laborer apparently had said that if the Javanese came to power no white man would stay alive. Some employees gathered in the home of the accountant where rifles and munitions were stored. Yet, in the *kampongs* (housing subdivisions) everything remained quiet. On February 7, work was halted at the plantation. Three people from Marienburg were wounded in Paramaribo and it turned out that the inhabitants from Zoelen never even

reached town because the ferry had stopped working. The Javanese generally were indignant about the passive behavior of the British Indians, whom they accused of desertion by not going to the capital.

A month after the February events the situation at Marienburg had returned to normal, according to director Manschot. He now thought that the employees had been overly afraid, which he blamed on the lack of reliable intelligence. 'The information provided by domestics, servants, *mandurs*, and mistresses is not trustworthy.' They were often not 100 percent *kampong* inhabitants anymore and were thus partially coopted by the Europeans. Occasionally some Javanese might also deliberately have given false information (SSM 26 Marienburg 7-3-1933, no. 339). On balance, the popular protests of the early 1930s were important, yet they never profoundly threatened the stability of the established order.

All these incidents, and the rebellion of 1902 in particular, highlight several features of plantation society. First, despite repeated government reports that cited the wage issue as the source of the problems, the management refused to accept this explanation.²³ Rather, the directors accused the Immigration officials of not acting severely enough against lazy and work-shy coolies. As in slave times, the planters rejected the notion that their management caused rebelliousness. As during slavery, outside forces such as 'malevolent coolies from Demerara' were blamed (Craton 1982: 241). The planters wished to have their cake and eat it too: they did not want government interference in wage disputes, but longed for stronger government action to enforce the labor laws that kept the indentureds under strict control.

Second, the rebellions were almost always isolated incidents. An outbreak on one plantation generally did not spark simultaneous uprisings on other estates. This in itself is testimony to the enormous power that the plantation system exerted on the colony. Yet, the planters perceived every sign of unrest as a major threat, for they did not know whom to trust anymore. As a result, they almost always overreacted with heavy-handed responses. The stereotype 'docile' to describe the contract laborer changed to 'violent' and 'murderous'. This was a logical outcome when peaceful protest was met first by the authoritarian attitudes of the planters and later by state authoritarianism in the form of the police and army, which put the workers' backs against the wall. The use of bullets was justified as self-defense in the face of mutiny (see also Rodney 1981: 157-158). On the other hand, the sporadic nature of violent uprisings also illustrates that the revolts were mostly spontaneous, non-political, and unorganized. A specific incident sufficed to trigger them. Most protests lacked leadership; collective action made it difficult for the authorities to single out scapegoats who

could be blamed for the unrest. Yet, in most cases one or more leaders were identified, arrested and brought to 'justice'. The response by management and state probably not only had its effect on the laborers at the 'unruly' estate but also on other plantation populations. The harsher the authorities reacted, the more frightened people would be to protest their conditions (Rodney 1981: 159). This might explain the period of relative calm after resistance and reaction had peaked in 1902.

CONCLUSION

Following emancipation the planters retained crucial features of the work discipline that had existed during slavery. The slaves were replaced by indentured immigrants who were controlled through a strict labor contract. Now the planters relied on the courts to maintain discipline. The white minority attempted to increase the division among their subordinates by encouraging labor competition between free and contract laborers; emphasizing racial and religious differences; and employing psychological tactics such as preferential treatment, co-optation, and racial stereotyping. As a result, the dual burden of indentureship and division among themselves retarded the organization of plantation workers. The financial dependency on the estates was compounded by other material relations such as plantation housing and garden plots. Thus, to use Rodney's words, 'accommodation was a necessary aspect of survival within a system in which power was so comprehensively monopolised by the planter class' (1981: 151). To be sure, some laborers put up a fight against the planters but in general it was hard to distinguish between those contractants who defied and those who complied. Indentured laborers protested planter domination through individual actions such as refusal to work, feigned illness, arson, desertion, destruction, and murder. Most thefts, however, can be categorized under non-political 'criminal behavior'. Most often the victims were socially equal to the perpetrators; only occasionally was property of the plantation stolen.

Collective action often took the form of violent uprisings. Such massive rebellions, however, should be called 'conflicts' rather than 'struggles', since they did not challenge the system of exploitation. Most of the revolts were unplanned and had short-range goals, such as immediate amelioration of material conditions or a thirst for vengeance directed more at specific people than at the plantation society in general. Hugh Tinker seems to blame the indentureds for their 'shortsightedness for they thought only in terms of immediate objectives... They protested because the management tried to take away an existing portion of their agreed conditions'.²⁴

The frequency of prosecution under the penal sanction, rather than sporadic violent upheavals, demonstrates more clearly the spirit of dissatisfaction and unrest (Rodney 1981: 152). The constantly high number of cases involving breach of contract before the courts is the best proof of persistent protest and contradicts the myth of the 'docile coolie'. The courts served simultaneously as instruments to maintain planter control, protect the indentureds against excessive exploitation, and to promote 'civilized', i.e. western, behavior.

Contract laborers differed from slaves in that they entered, supposedly voluntarily, into a time-specific contract. There was light at the end of the tunnel for the indentured immigrant, and this might explain his preference for acts of non-cooperation over massive rebellions, which could jeopardize both his future freedom and life.

NOTES

1. I would like to thank Cheryll Cody, Jane Landers, Jim Amelang and Gert Oostindie for their valuable comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

2. According to some scholars the planters themselves still punished workers by flogging them, thus bypassing the legal system (Van Wengen 1972: 15). Personnel employed at Marienburg was officially prohibited to assault workers, except in self-defense. According to the NHM this rule was violated repeatedly (SSM 62 Amsterdam 4-8-1933, no. 291). Of course, it is impossible to know how extensive the use of corporal punishment was, since such illegal actions were not recorded. Contemporaries also criticized the court system itself. In 1870-1871 a commission of inquiry in British Guiana revealed that the courts were 'too ready to take the word of a complaining manager against that of his employee. There was too great a readiness to ignore laws which managers found inconvenient, and too much reluctance to prosecute offending managers. Estate drivers could and did tyrannize over the labourers. Facilities for complaining to the Agent General were inadequate, especially on remote estates'. (Laurence 1971: 52-53). The result of this inquiry was a complete overhaul of the immigration law in 1873. Yet, Lord Sanderson still condemned the 'excessive recourse to the courts... (as) the one great defect in the indenture system; and deliberate steps should be taken to reduce the incidence of prosecution for absence, desertion, and refusal to work'. (Sanderson Committee 1910: 13-14). A few years later James McNeill and Chimmam Lal reported that the 'reliance on the courts to maintain discipline seems to have grown into a habit of mind with the majority of managers, who should rely on their own tact and skill in managing labour' (1915: 18-21).

3. SSM 26 Marienburg 11-7-1932; see also SSM 7 Marienburg 18-2-1909, no. 520; SSM 7 Marienburg 15-6-1911 aan Commissie Financieel-Economische Toestand Suriname; and the Surinamese newspaper *Onze West* 18-9-1912, no. 1369.

4. SSM 6 Marienburg 24-9-1906, no. 891. During that period the police also received slashing critiques in the press.

5. Missing are the second half of January, August, first half of September, first half of October and first half of November. The data are published in *Onze West*.

6. Twenty years later, resistance expressed in words, threats and gestures was no longer punished by jail sentences (SSM 8 Marienburg 3-7-1917, no. 650).

7. SSM 7 Marienburg 24-2-1908, no. 499. In 1906 the number of desertions by Javanese was called alarming (SSM 6 *verslag* 1906). Newspapers reported in 1904 already that many runaways, especially from Marienburg and Zoelen, visited Paramaribo (*Onze West* 3-8-1904, no. 503; see also Tinker 1974: 196).

8. *Onze West* 4-1-1908, no. 859; 11-1-1908, no. 861; 25-1-1908, no. 865; and 1-2-1908, 867. Some of the maroon camps were said to be large enough to house thirty people. The Marienburg documents do not mention these camps nor any fugitives working on government settlements.

9. Plantation	average n. Jav. wrks.	n.compl.	%
Rust en Werk	278	3	1.1
Alliance	293	34	11.6
Waterloo/Hazard	258	51	19.8
Marienburg/Zoelen	1408	589	41.8

Source: SSM 14 Paramaribo 14-8-1919, Westra aan NHM.

10. *Koloniale Verslagen* relevant years. Tinker (1974: 194) gives the following data for other sugar colonies in 1907-1908: British Guiana 20%; Trinidad 16%; Jamaica 8%; Fiji 20%; Mauritius 3%.

11. The fire is not mentioned in the Marienburg records, but reported in *Onze West* 18-11-1899, no. 15. The women, while found guilty, were not punished, see SSM 5 brief aan de gouverneur van Suriname, no date, probably July/August 1897. The destruction of the cane field is mentioned in ARA, NHM U 1139-9185, 1908.

12. SSM 6 Marienburg 22-10-1905, no. 863; SSM 21 Marienburg 9-9-1924 no. 78; and the newspaper *Suriname* 16-2-1925, no. 102. The assailant of Del Prado was sentenced to three years (SSM 19 Marienburg 4-11-1925, no. 849). On Saeys' case see SSM 23 Marienburg 29-11-1929, no. 987. The offender of Monsanto got one month (SSM 28 Marienburg 28-1-1935, no. 532 and 27-2-1935, no. 540).

13. SSM 3 Paramaribo 18-9-1884, no. 26. See also Hira 1983: 204-205 and *Koloniaal Verslag* 1885. In the same month a similar wage dispute led to a major conflict at plantation Zorg en Hoop. Again the DC and the military were called in. Nevertheless, worker resistance remained fierce and the soldiers were ordered to fire. The tragic result was that seven Hindustani were shot to death (SSM 3 Paramaribo 27-9-1884, no. 29. Also Hira 1983: 205-206 and *Koloniaal Verslag* 1885).

14. SSM 4 Marienburg 26-8-1891, no. 212 AH Van der Geyt to Amsterdam. This opinion was also orally communicated to the Governor, thus not in the official letter. The English Consul also accused the Attorney General of murder.

15. This description relies upon the government version of the events as published in *Koloniaal Verslag* 1902, bijlage M. The NHM correspondence over these years is missing and the reports to the shareholders do not give a detailed account of the disturbances.

16. See footnote 15. There exist extensive newspaper reports on the court sessions in *Onze West* 12-10-1902, no. 318 and 25-10-1902, no. 319.

17. According to Donald Wood (1968: 116), on a sugar estate a horse symbolized the higher ranks in the plantation hierarchy.

18. According to an article in the Surinamese newspaper *De Ware tijd* (1-6-1984) by R. Djwalapersad, the victims were buried in a mass grave between two layers of quicklime. Leo Ferrier also mentions that the dead were buried in such a grave after they had been displayed to the public as a deterrent (SSM 81/44 II). The *Koloniaal Verslag* and NHM reports do not mention a mass grave. The site of the supposed grave is unknown.

19. One problem, however, was that the earnings were determined after measuring the cane. Thus the wages were not known to the cutters beforehand (*Onze West* 25-10-1902, no. 319).

20. The popularity of Mavor among the workers is disputed. Tinker (1974: 228) claims that he took Hindustani women at his will, but gives no source for this allegation.

21. In both cases the convicts were sentenced to four to six months hard labor (SSM 7 Marienburg 17-10-1908, no. 513; 12-1-1909, no. 517; 27-1-1909, no. 518; and 8-2-1909, no. 519).

22. Compare to the conditions under slavery in the U.S. 'Serious were the perceived signs of a different spirit among blacks... a glum stare, a brusque reply to a question, a reluctant move - such gestures in face-to-face encounter raised instant worries' (Wyatt-Brown 1982: 409).

23. K.O. Laurence (1971: 55) states that 'the authorities in the British West Indies regularly denied that the level of wages was a cause of dispute; but the frequency of this denial is in itself suspicious'...

24. Tinker 1974: 226. See also Brereton (1979: 179) and compare to slavery in eighteenth-century Virginia: 'The most violent reactions to slavery were small, unorganized uprisings.' The explanation for revolts was a familiar one, 'Treated with too much lenity the slaves become insolent and unruly' (Mullin 1972: 59). Mullin also emphasizes that the goals of the protests were short range, such as a better diet, less work or to get even with a superior. Eugene Genovese (1979: 3) states too that 'many slave revolts began as more or less spontaneous acts of desperation against extreme severity, hunger, sudden withdrawal of privileges, or other local or immediate conditions'.

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The following abbreviations have been used: ARA (Algemeen Rijks Archief, the Hague); S.G. (Verslagen en Handelingen der Staten Generaal); NHM (Nederlandsche Handel-Maatschappij); SSM (Stichting Surinaams Museum, Paramaribo).

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WEST INDIAN LITERATURE AS AN EXPRESSION OF NATIONAL
CULTURES: THE LITERATURE OF ST. LUCIA

'and then each rock broke into its own nation' (Walcott, 'The sea is history')

In the above line, Derek Walcott takes a despairing glance at the present reality of political individualism among the island-nations of the Caribbean, a reality which, ever since the breakdown of the West Indian Federation, has meant the loss of their more hopeful promise as one regional entity.¹ Walcott's line echoes the kind of concerns with which one begins to focus on the literatures of the individual islands - an approach which raises similar questions about separate national literatures or a single regional literature. One needs to start with at least this qualification: West Indian literature, from its earliest beginnings to the present, has always been much more about West Indian nationalism than about separate national identities. The writers have demonstrated one common pursuit, the urgency of which far transcends the individual needs of their various territories. They have all drawn strength from the sense of a shared preoccupation with the basic question facing the peoples of the region: the question of where to find and how to realize themselves in the wake of the experience of slavery and colonialism.

Each writer comes to this collective endeavour, however, out of the lived experience of his own island background. Walcott, again, provides a striking example of the functional relationship between the two. His arch-hero Makak (*Dream on Monkey Mountain*) comes from his childhood memory of a rowdy, awesome woodcutter in St. Lucia.² To make him the carrier of his revolutionary message, Walcott has loaded him with regional history. Makak starts from the common stigmas of racial inferiority and the degrading image of the native as ape-figure, as his French patois name implies. At the same time, Walcott has set him in a cultural milieu which draws as much on the peasant life of his native St. Lucia as on

the urban folk milieu of Trinidad (with its calypso and stick-fighting tradition, its spiritual Baptist cult). But it is one of Walcott's special strengths that he aims at and realizes this kind of fusion.

To stress the importance of the regional context, however, is not to deny the fact that from one writer to another the literature does present a number of distinct socio-cultural environments. We get the multi-racial milieu of Trinidad in Naipaul; the felt presence of the vast interior and Amerindian hinterland in Harris' Guyana; the climate of small-island privation in the early Walcott's St. Lucia. To take these differences into account becomes useful and important for several reasons. First, it puts into focus the extent to which the local circumstances of his island/territory have determined each particular writer's orientation: his perception of, and response to the problem of identity. Seen close-up, each environment presents its own variety of the underlying predicament to explain the different, often controversial 'answers' we get from these writers. From such a close-up view of each particular environment one gets, ultimately, a full sense of the complexity of the history enacted in the region, as colonialism adapted to varying combinations of factors from one territory to another. On the positive side, these individual portraits also serve to highlight the rich variety of resources contained within this diversity, which is one of the region's greatest strengths.

The present paper examines the case of St. Lucia, a small, underdeveloped island from which has come a substantial contribution to the literature of the West Indies. The achievement of its native Derek Walcott, a major poet and dramatist, has made this contribution especially outstanding. The island is also represented by the novelist Garth St. Omer, who first appeared in the late sixties with a slim but very impressive output. Other significant figures include Roderick Walcott (Derek's twin brother) who ranks among the foremost pioneers of West Indian drama; and Stanley French, who has produced a number of fine plays. Quite a few promising figures, moreover, have emerged in the last decade.³ We will deal here, however, only with the works of Derek Walcott and Garth St. Omer, in whom the level of engagement is strongest. There are large areas of difference between Walcott and St. Omer, both in outlook and in sensibility; but they both carry a clear, authentic image of their native island. From their works emerges a graphic portrait of the society and its setting, stamped with its own variety of the colonial condition. The characteristic aspects of that setting, importantly, have closely informed the original leanings and preoccupations of both writers.

St. Lucia emerges from the early Walcott and St. Omer as a small-island setting dominated by poverty and religion, here represented by

Roman Catholicism. These two particular factors, to a large extent, determined and defined the reality of the island in colonial times. A brief survey of St. Lucia's history will give the background to these factors as well as other related aspects of the island's cultural legacy.⁴

St. Lucia was discovered, probably by the Spanish, sometime between the late 15th and the early 16th centuries. Several European nations made abortive attempts to settle the island in the early decades of the 17th century. They met with, among other adverse factors, the resistance of the indigenous Caribs, who were themselves eventually wiped out. It was the French who, in 1650, made the first successful attempt at settlement. From that time (circa 1657) and through the period of slavery, St. Lucia was the object of a long-drawn out struggle between the French and British, who each sought to secure it as a military base. The island shifted from the one to the other in the naval battles waged by these powers throughout the 18th century in Caribbean waters. By the time it was finally settled on the British (1814), it had passed hands between them fourteen times. The French however, in addition to their early start, had held the island during its longest spell of peacetime development. They were therefore responsible for the most formative influences. St. Lucia thus emerged as a special type of anomaly: officially British, but essentially French in cultural influence.⁵

Two main features survived as a monument to this French colonial legacy: the French patois dialect which remains the native tongue of the majority of the island's people, and Roman Catholicism, which claims 95 per cent of the population to this day. The Catholic Church rose to its monopoly in a neglected British colonial outpost. Its influence extended into the public sphere. Education, for example, remained under its exclusive control until the early seventies. Its strict code of orthodox morality presided over norms and mores in the society. It is interesting to note that St. Lucia is one of the few islands where Baptist-Revivalist sects never took root. What all this amounts to, in effect, is that, to all intents and purposes, the Catholic Church was the main local agency of the colonial dispensation in that island.

What helped especially to maintain this religious stronghold was the fundamental problem of the island's extreme poverty. Like the other tiny, underdeveloped territories of the region, St. Lucia lacked the material resources to support its population – a mere 80,000 in the forties and fifties. It was still virtually dependent on a meagre sugar industry, which was itself undergoing a general decline in the area. Sugar production was confined to two plantations in the north-east of the island, and provided employment for a limited number of laborers from the neighboring rural

districts. A coaling industry, also in its dying phases, provided even more minimal employment for the urban poor in the capital town of Castries. The familiar problem of low wage conditions, moreover, was the order of the day, and had already given rise to some degree of unrest in both industries.⁶ The majority of the island's people, however, scattered in its isolated coastal districts, eked out a living as small subsistence peasants and fisherfolk, often at the destitute level presented in Walcott's *The sea at Dauphin* (1970). A large deprived class of peasants and fisherfolk in the rural districts; an urban contingent of small vendors, artisans and domestics; a would-be middle class of civil servants and teachers - these comprised the essential reality of St. Lucia's society and its means.

Traditional Catholicism, sublimating earthly suffering in the hope of supernatural reward, thrived well in this climate of privation. Walcott and St. Omer both show, from the outset, an acute reaction to this overwhelming Catholic presence, and a sense of the island's plight within the combined stranglehold of poverty and religion. In both, the first instincts of protest are directed against the religious establishment. St. Omer provides a good point of entry into these fundamentals of the island's social reality. Confining his gaze to the small urban capital of Castries, he deals with a social realism which closely documents the conditions and character of its life. His novels are a searching analysis of precisely this twin problem of poverty and religion, and probe some of the lasting injuries to the St. Lucian sensibility.

St. Omer has produced four novels so far: *A Room on the hill* (1968), *Shades of grey* (1968), *Nor any country* (1969), and *J-, Black Bam and the masqueraders* (1972).⁷ These works explore one single subject: the dilemma of the educated native son, returning home to take his place and make a contribution to his society. He finds this purpose thwarted by a society still trapped in the dearth of persisting poverty and alien religious values. He comes to face, instead, his own personal paralysis and psychic disability. In a sensitive response to St. Omer's theme, Walcott (1969: 50-51) has described this dilemma as 'homecomings without home'. The St. Omer persona, who appears in all the various protagonists, sums up the problem thus: 'From his memory he had exhumed corpses of his old self, probing them with the scalpel of his new awareness. ...But the timidity and fear his discovery of himself had instilled and the paralysis they induced made any reconstruction in the future too daring for him to contemplate.' (*Room*, pp. 36-38). Inclined towards self-withdrawal, he remains intimately enmeshed in the reality of that society, experiencing his past and continuing ties with it. He therefore reflects the predicament of the society in analyzing his own.

St. Omer stays within a domestic, private sphere of experience to explore this dilemma. He deals in mainly personal relationships: between parents and children, husbands and wives, sexual partners, as well as close friends. From the protagonist's immediate background - the lower and 'backyard' classes comprising market-vendors, shopkeepers, domestic servants - comes one of the most endemic ills. John, in *Room on the hill*, sees it in the general picture of lives impoverished of all save the practices and pieties of religion. His own mother is the painful prototype of this condition. Her life has been strictly divided between scraping to see her son through school and attending to such ritual acts of devotion: 'The sputtering of the small lamp, and the holy images it never ceased to burn before, were her only heralds.' (*Room*, p. 34). At the core of this kind of virtuous poverty lies the Catholic doctrine of the after-life, fostering the attitude of resignation and sacrifice in deprivation. In the environment she represents, the doctrine of sin and punishment is just as strongly internalized, with equally repressive results.

What stands out especially in the community St. Omer presents is the rigid system of orthodox morality, which closely regulated its life. It dictated the prevailing codes, sanctions and mores of the society. Among these, the most formidable was the sanction against illegitimacy. It imposed all kinds of double-standards and constraints in a largely underprivileged class where the traditional pattern of unmarried mothers and fatherless homes obtained. Most expressive of the kind of authoritarianism the Church stood for was its policy for enforcing this sanction. Young men and women involved in pregnancies outside marriage had the choice of either getting married or losing their jobs in the teaching service and similar educational opportunities. This is the subject of St. Omer's most powerful novel so far, *J-, Black Bam and the masqueraders*, to which we will return later.

There is nothing particularly unusual about this type of obscurantism in the older forms of orthodox Catholicism; nor was St. Lucia the only place to suffer from it. The point is, though, that the Catholic institution assumed an inordinate influence in shaping this small society because of the virtual absence of any other active, directing forces in what was a forgotten colonial backwater. The only prospects for possible change lay in the few openings through higher education, which were becoming available in St. Omer's time. Meanwhile, the influence of the Church extended into all spheres of sociocultural organization in the island-community. It stood solidly in the background of race, color, and class alignments in the society. The island had its own quaint variant of the race-class syndrome. Most St. Lucian writers record the image of the two short streets adjoining the Cathedral in the capital town of Castries. There

a small group of French creole mulattoes lived secluded and remote from the black community around it – except for its occasional sexual raids on their lower ranks. This mulatto enclave represented, to all intents and purposes, the 'white' elite of the community. A white priesthood, the French and Irish religious orders who ran the schools, and this invisible elite naturally rallied to uphold the white models and values which overshadowed the black community. St. Omer conveys the character of that white morality system in a reference to one notorious practice. He refers to a system of double uniforms operated by the nuns who ran the single secondary school for girls – one colour for legitimates and another for illegitimates. There is a curious twist in the situation he presents. A member of the white elite was able to buy his illegitimate daughter by a black servant the legitimate status.

One thing becomes quite clear about the society St. Omer recaptures: there were glaring gaps between its prescribed norms and its actual practices. The system harbored the kind of hypocrisy just cited. More critically, its pressures and strains backfired to cause total disarray within the most private areas of human relationship. Family, married, and sexual life were all strangely disordered. Most of St. Omer's characters are casualties of one type or another of these abnormal relationships; and his final, most penetrating focus is on the toll in damaged psyches and ruined lives.

In his culminating novel, *J-, Black Bam and the masqueraders*, St. Omer describes a situation that highlights the extreme reaches of just these violations. The novel juxtaposes the stories of two St. Lucian brothers, Paul and Peter Breville. Paul, the older brother who remained on the island, has ended up mad; Peter, who left the island on a scholarship, has just returned to a university post in one of 'the larger islands to the north'. The technique of the novel is both functional and thematic. Paul's letters to his brother, a desperate outpouring of his memories, alternate with snapshots of Peter's present life in the other island. The two brothers, in fact, emerge as alternate sides of the same coin: Paul, a victim of madness; Peter trapped in a violent, destructive marriage to a St. Lucian girl from his past. It is as if, in other words, neither had 'escaped'.

Behind their two contrasting circumstances lay two opposite choices. Both brothers had found themselves faced with the same problem, common enough: to conform to the Church's policy on extra-marital pregnancies or lose their chances of a future through education. Paul, always confident of his own brilliance, had preferred to defy the system rather than enter into a marriage he did not want. Peter had married Phyllis, whom he later suspects of having deliberately trapped him, to preserve his chance of pursuing a career. To survive in the island, where he is doomed to

remain, Paul dons a pose of madness. He is seduced into the role by egomaniac delusions of his own apartness, and contempt for his mean surroundings. The pose of madness becomes all too real. Peter, on the other side, pays an equally high price for his convenient conformism. His life with Phyllis is a mutually destructive affair, now down to a level of raw brutality and violence. He has nothing in common with the wife who had actually waited eight years in his mother's house during his absence. (Peter had left to take up the scholarship soon after marrying her.) Phyllis embodies some of the worst hangovers of the past. She is devoid of ambition and is inarticulate, driven solely by her ambition to find her own salvation in someone, like Peter, who had achieved success. In her fights with him she keeps returning to this statement as her sole defense: 'I don't have nowhere to go. So you taking advantage' (*J-, Black Bam...*, p. 23). It sadly sums up her plight as a trapped animal.

Phyllis herself is one of the casualties of the past. She comes, warped, from one of those clandestine liaisons between white upper class and black which made social history in the island. She is the mulatto daughter of a white father from the French creole elite, who had kept a separate house for his 'outside' children (as the saying goes in the region), and their black mother. The latter, almost like the housekeeper of this illegitimate household, emerged from the back quarters of the house only during his visits. Phyllis had suddenly found all prospects of mulatto privilege shattered at his death, and had placed her stakes for retaining her higher entitlements as a mulatto in marriage to a promising black. Peter himself had been drawn to the compensations of her long hair and fair complexion. Phyllis's fixation becomes pathological in the face of a failing marriage. It assumes truly manic proportions, and erupts into raw violence, physical response seeming to be her only recourse. She drives Peter into beating her on the Campus fields; she finds her way into the house of the French colleague with whom Peter is having an affair, lies in wait, and gives her a sound beating with a stick. She smacks of an insanity even more disturbing than Paul's. In fact, in Paul's world, as in that of Peter, who is yielding to his own paralysis under the pressure, the crises all end in psychological collapse.

St. Omer singles out a portrait of St. Lucia which obviously has some personal urgency for him. Though there are other faces besides the one he shows, he does sound some of the key notes of the St. Lucian sensibility, and evokes strains and postures which also appear in Walcott. His images point to an authentic pull between two opposite strains of that sensibility – the one repressed, the other charged with a spirit and energy that will not stay harnessed. It is interesting, in this respect, to note the use St.

Omer makes of folk forms like the local masquerades. They appear in all his novels, and include the masquerade of the costumed child-eating devils we meet in *Ti-Jean and his brothers* (1970), and bands of revellers on the trail of the town's eccentrics, or following popular dumb shows. In St. Omer, these folk customs usually convey notes of hysteria and dread. In *Room on the hill*, Old Alphonse is one of the town's self-dramatizing layabouts, leading a band of shouting children. The bacchanal starts as a humoring of Old Alphonse, but soon becomes more of a harrying of this would-be hero. It is almost as if the wilder spirits of the crowd were finding release from their Sunday habits.

It is an easy step from this public madness to the private schizophrenia of a Paul. Similar tensions lie behind the strange form of rebellion he is driven to perform. Paul is the likeness, on his higher level, of a number of possessed derelicts and layabouts of whom Walcott, in "What the twilight says", writes: 'The derelicts who mimed their tragedies, the lunatics who every day improvised absurd monodramas. ...all towns are full of them, but their determined, self-destructive desolation was performed' (1970b: 23). Walcott has preserved the image of these derelicts, all living legends in their time, in a portrait gallery which is one of the outstanding things in *Another life*. Their strange obsessions attest to a vexed, distressed, but irrepressible spirit, as in this picture of a crippled mother being carried by her son. She cuts a strangely imposing figure, while he feels heroic in his wretched burden:

Berthilia
 the frog-like, crippled crone,
 a hump on her son's back, is carried
 to her straw mat, her day-long perch,
 Cassandra, with her drone unheeded.
 Her son, Pierre, carries night-soil in buckets,
 She spurs him like a rider,
 horsey back, horsey back;
 when he describes his cross he sounds content,
 he is everywhere admired. A model son.

(III.ii.28-37)

Walcott describes them as 'the stars of his mythology', recalling those early fantasies in which he tried to find for each derelict a parallel among the Greek epic heroes. The entire effort suggests that it was these reduced figures who first defined for him in their reversed 'heroic' way the awesome reaches of human suffering and defeat. Tutored as he was on classical literature, it was in them that he found his first real-life glimpse of the tragic.

St. Lucia has been present in Walcott's work from the beginning. Walcott gives a much fuller and richer portrait of the island than St. Omer, embracing as he does the 'several postures' of its physical and human landscape. His major work so far, *Another life*, comes out of the simultaneous pain and love with which he continues to possess the entire landscape. He uncovers, accordingly, both its disfigurements and its areas of possibility. One major difference between Walcott's St. Lucia and that of St. Omer is that Walcott includes the life of the island's country districts and coastal villages, drawing upon its more active, rural folk culture.⁸ It is in these areas that he seeks out the unfettered spirit and essence of the place: 'In the deep country it found the natural man,/generous, rooted' (*Another life*, VII.i.31-32). We will return to this highly significant feature in his work.

Walcott, too, as already observed, starts with an early attack on the unholy alliance between poverty and religion in the island. (He himself belonged to a tiny Methodist contingent, a situation which probably made him all the more sensitive to the pervasive influence of the dominant religion.) He deals with the subject in his first important play, *The sea at Dauphin* (1970),⁹ in which the fisherman-hero, Afa, is his spokesman. Afa is the lone angry voice in the village, railing against religious servitude and complacency amid destitution. Thus, in the accents of the local patois, he says: 'Dirt and prayers is Dauphin life, in Dauphin, Canaries, Micoud. Where they have priest is poverty' (11.517-518). In the same play, Walcott shows an early penetration of the final danger to the black spirit colonized by a white imperial religion – that of seeing the very universe refracted through the white race, of internalizing that image. Afa points to this danger obliquely, as he draws upon the stark, physical images of his rough 'piece of coast' to rage against its ills:

God is a white man. The sky is his blue eye,
His spit on Dauphin people is the sea.
(11.67-68)

The theme, which Walcott calls one race's quarrel with another's God, recurs throughout his works. He returns to the idea again and again, and expresses the view that the black race can come to terms with the problem only by taking possession of this God and remaking it in the image of its own soul. The spirit of militancy, the deeply-inspired will to survive which distinguishes the Afro-American traditions of Christianity, represents for him this kind of achievement (1974: 7-12).

There was, however, one especially curious feature about the religious

environment of the St. Lucia in which Walcott grew up. A strong, though 'submerged' core of primitive religion existed alongside the formal. Walcott was deeply responsive to this phenomenon. His work registers the ambivalences and clashes this juxtaposition involved, and the powerful climate of superstition it created. 'The Pact' in *Another life* (I.iv) is an inset of a strange tale of sorcery, locally known as obeah, of a kind which still survives in the superstitious lore of the island. According to the general belief, individuals who practice obeah engage in various evil and mysterious activities by virtue of certain powers they receive from the Devil (see Breen 1970: 249). They use these powers mainly to work harm against their enemies, or for purposes of worldly gain. To secure these powers, they have made a pact with the Devil – which means, effectively, that their souls are contracted to him. In a play entitled *Malfinis* (1966), Roderick Walcott deals with the authentic case of three malefactors who set out to fulfill such a pact by tearing out the heart of a child live.¹⁰ The deed was intended to bring them a good cane harvest. This is the practice, incidentally, alluded to in the chant of the child-eating Devils used in *Ti-Jean and his brothers*.

'The Pact' tells the tale of Monsieur Auguste Manoir, 'pillar of business and the Church', whose pact with the Devil is uncovered by a strange sequence of events. One fateful night, Manoir's watchman deals a sinister-looking dog a blow. The truth about Manoir's identity as a sorcerer comes to light when a mysterious bloodstain is discovered on the streets next day, while Manoir lies dying in his bed. It was Manoir himself, the community believes, who, in the form of a dog, had received that blow which divested him of his powers and spelt his death:

The blood of garbage mongrels had a thin,
watery excretion; this, a rich red
bubbled before their eyes.

Monsieur Manoir
urged his ringed, hairy hand to climb his stomach
to nuzzle at his heart.

.....
hearing his blood race
like wine from a barrel when its bung has burst.
(I.iv.88-98)

The tale attests to the power of a subterranean 'negromancy' that proved 'stronger than their mass'. That 'negromancy' found points of contact, in fact, with the core of Catholic supernaturalism. Thus, in the Manoir incident, a priest is on the scene to perform the necessary rites as official

exorcist. The combination served to compound the peculiar atmosphere of superstition in the island. Walcott sums up the phenomenon thus:

One step behind the city was the bush.
One step behind the Church door stood the devil.
(IV.11.62-63)

He captures a timeless portrait of the island in that image.

Walcott's work reflects the several, complex facets of religion in St. Lucia. He was above all concerned with the lack of spiritual direction underlying the strong hold of religion on the people, and despaired of the backwardness and ignorance fostered by this climate of superstition. Yet the root problems and urgencies of religion in St. Lucia left a lasting influence on Walcott. That influence survives in his central preoccupation with the possibility of a liberating faith, and the need for spiritual wholeness. The case of Dunstan St. Omer, the St. Lucian painter, is relevant here. He is the Gregorias to whom Walcott pays a major tribute in *Another life*. Dunstan St. Omer has made his own impressive contribution in the sphere of religion with a number of paintings which draw upon local forms and features to recast the Christian faith in the native image and sensibility.¹¹ This achievement fulfils his early revolutionary ambition to indigenize and liberate religious faith in the island. A revolutionary in spirit, St. Omer is yet a product of the pervasive religious culture we have been considering. Against this background, it seems to me, we can begin to appreciate why Walcott's militancy remains essentially a-political, and his affirmations deeply 'religious' in intention.

It is the island's country districts, however, its small peasant communities and fishing villages – the scenes of its largely rustic culture¹² – that comprise the largest and most seminal area of the St. Lucian presence in Walcott's work. Included is the surrounding physical setting, which accounts for more than three quarters of its undeveloped area: the mountain-forest of Makak; the coastal settings of its fisher-folk; and the island-sea, which is everywhere in Walcott. The physical setting is in itself an organic element of culture in Walcott's imaginative world.

This rustic configuration is of far-reaching significance in Walcott's work. He seems, from the very beginning, to be virtually turning away from St. Omer's 'unreal' town to seek out a more authentic life in these country districts. He goes to this setting for his first and arch-heroes – the fisherman Afa, the charcoal burner Makak. It is 'out of these foresters and fishermen' that he makes 'heraldic men'.¹³ Walcott's 'heraldic men' are, to begin with, natural rebel-figures, law-breakers or felons, like the Chantal of *Malcochon*

(1970) from whom Makak evolves. They all stand outside and come into conflict with the inherited social order. Secondly, all carve out a livelihood from bare elemental resources, and are potentially their own masters – that is, potentially independent spirits. In Walcott's view, these virtues and strengths inhere in their very denuded, reduced condition. Walcott thus perceives this characteristic condition as the ground of primal possibilities. The idea is reiterated throughout his work.

But Walcott is not being so unrealistic as to stop at this 'primal' level, and deny the even more palpable socio-cultural context. This is clear from his presentation of Makak. Makak in his mountain-forest setting is a man living on his own ground, off its elemental resources. As such, he has a pure unadulterated capacity to lay claim to his own roots there. Yet, any impulse towards this very real potential is thwarted and mocked by the deformed self-image that lives with Makak, even in isolation. The latter is, of course, the legacy of racial oppression and subjugation, which spell socio-historical necessity. In the tug-of-war that is waged within Makak, it is the independent spirit that prevails, overcoming the negative self-image (held up to him by the mulatto Lestrade). At such points, Walcott's roots in St. Lucian culture, and his wider concern with West Indian race and history, join forces and become one.

The belief in primal possibility, further, does not mean that Walcott subscribes to the notion of a *tabula rasa* in his vision of Caribbean man: he is too much aware of the mixed bag of traditions that is part of the region's complex historical legacy. Walcott believes, however, that the task of building a world from scratch, which is the challenge of a new environment, means that Caribbean man has the potentiality of injecting a new lease on life into whatever he creates. Whatever he retains from older traditions, whatever new syntheses emerge, are charged afresh with human purpose. Thus Walcott sees the promise of the region as one of *renewal*. The renewal consists of, and is synonymous with the very process of indigenization.

Walcott's view of creolization is based on this concept of renewal. He sees a creole folklore, for example, in the masquerades and legends of the island, which are survivals of both the African and the French cultures. These sources are important, but even more important for Walcott is this: their power of survival came from the fact that they took on new and particular urgencies in the extraordinary circumstances of the slave ancestors. Thus if the Ti-Jean legends are a combination of African and Western survivals, they are above all an expression of the sensibility of the indigenous folk.

It is for these reasons that Walcott celebrates the greatest legacy of

his native land thus, in the closing lines of his crowning poetic achievement so far:

Gregorias listen, lit
we were the light of the world!
We were blest with a virginal, unpainted world
with Adam's task of giving things their names,
(*Another life*, XXIII.iv.11-14)

Here he recovers the wonder and elation, the creative ardor he and St. Omer shared as young artists discovering the features of a setting that had so far lain unseen. Finally, his most moving tribute in *Another life* is to the man who directed them to look, and see the island for the first time. He was Harold Simmons (1914-1966), the St. Lucian painter who served as their tutor and mentor. This man can well be regarded as the father of St. Lucian culture. He was the first to embark upon a full-scale mission to search out and define the features of the island: its folk forms and customs, its flora, geography, and native faces. To this task he brought the talents of the painter, folklorist, anthropologist, and naturalist, all mostly self-taught and amateur. The closing movements of Walcott's tribute call the island to solemn last respects to this St. Lucian who 'is a man no more/but the fervour and intelligence/of a whole country'. Joining in to consecrate his virtues are the laborers and fishermen at work, a doyen of the folk-dance, the natural setting itself – all the scenes which Simmons raised up to view:

Leonce, Placide, Alcindor,
Dominic, from whose plane vowels were shorn
odorous as forest
ask the charcoal burner to look up

with his singed eyes,
ask the lip-cracked fisherman three miles at sea
with nothing between him and Dahomey's coast
to dip rain water over his parched boards
for Monsieur Simmon, *pour* Msieu Harry Simmons,
.....
Blow out the eyes in the unfinished portraits.

And the old woman who danced
with a spine like the 'glory cedar',
.....
let her sit in her corner and become evening
for a man the colour of her earth,
.....

His island forest, open and enclose him
 like a rare butterfly between its leaves.
 (XX.iv.43-67)

This homage to Simmons captures the essential value of St. Lucia for Walcott. It also captures the true genius of the place.

NOTES

1. For a similar comment see Walcott 1979: 53.
2. See Walcott 1970a: 50.
3. The two leading figures of this younger generation are Robert Lee (poetry), and Kendel Hippolyte (poetry and drama). Their main publications so far are Lee's *Vocation* (St. Lucia, 1975) and Hippolyte's *Island in the sun, side two* (St. Lucia, 1981).
4. On the history of St. Lucia; see Jesse 1970 and Breen 1970.
5. The neighboring island of Dominica presents a similar case.
6. See Lewis 1977: 21-22.
7. These are all published by Faber and Faber. The Faber editions are used throughout the present essay.
8. Both writers are natives of the capital town of Castries.
9. The play was written circa 1954. It appears in the *Dream* collection.
10. The murder was discovered and the three men brought to trial. The trial, on which the play is based, took place in the 1930s.
11. See Walcott's poem on St. Omer's painting, 'For the altar- piece of the Roseau Valley Church, Saint Lucia' in Walcott 1976.
12. The rustic life-style of these country districts have given way to urban influences in more modern times.
13. See *Another life*, XII: 39-40.

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THE SUGARED MUSE: OR THE CASE OF JAMES GRAINGER,
MD (1721-66)

When James Grainger conceived the literary project that was later published as *The sugar cane: a poem in four books* (1764),¹ he must have had problems not dissimilar to those the early English planters faced as they attempted to cultivate sugar cane on the New World plantations of the West Indies. To the European planter, both the plant and the soil that was to give it nurture were alien: much experiment and innovation were going on in eighteenth-century Continental agriculture, but could the methods that worked in Europe be adapted to the West Indies? Could the new knowledge and technologies be transferred and utilized to make sugar-producing a profitable enterprise? And then, there were the deep philosophical issues of migrating large human masses from distant continents – African slaves to provide the labour, English masters (owners, overseers, managers and the like) to administer and control. What new relationships, compromises, appeasements would have to be forged between master class and slaves? How would these two groups in turn define themselves with respect to the unfamiliar space of New World cosmology? How, too, would both define themselves with respect to the commodity they were to produce, and what exactions would that commodity make on their identities?

The nature of these questions suggests why the idea and the existence of slave economies in the eighteenth-century colonial West Indies engaged the discourse of minds across the spectrum of literature, politics, economics, agriculture, and sociology. Analogically, the adaptation of an ancient form like the georgic to a new subject like the sugar cane (with both poem and plant taking shape outside traditional georgic country) required the fluid historical sense of a robust poetic imagination to interpret and translate into coherent vision the discrete insights and speculations such a project

could yield. Remarkable as an example of the profits and perils of imitation, *The sugar cane*, described by its author as a 'West India Georgic', raises a set of parallel, if not always identical, questions that hold the key to understanding the deeper epistemological and hermeneutic resources of Grainger's project.

What happens when an author adapts an old form to a new subject? What transformations operate to assist or impede the creative process so engaged? Could the commonplace agricultural procedures of transplanting seedlings provide semiological references which might help Grainger to resolve the logistical dilemmas of migrating the Muse to foreign parts, and to acculturate his own poetic sentiments to a New World landscape? Could that landscape be faithfully rendered in a foreign idiom? In short, would the old rules be applicable to this new 'husbandry'? Just as the sugar-cane-as-crop was new to West Indian soil, so was the sugar-cane-as-subject new to English poetry. Could this plant and its chief by-products, sugar and rum, be made palatable to the tastes of a serious English audience of fellow writers, readers and critics (so devoted to the values of tradition and decorum), all constituting a literary establishment led by Samuel Johnson, who found the West Indian plantocracy contemptible and the institution of slavery which supported it abominable?²

As a Doctor of Medicine and man of letters living and practicing in the West Indian island of St. Christopher, Grainger would appear theoretically well placed to elaborate from his study of these questions a systematized critique of the West Indian locus, its contents and discontents. He displays extensive knowledge in his description of cane culture and sugar manufacture. His catalogues of the medicinal uses of WI flora and fauna do justice to his scientific training; his word-pictures of the St. Christopher landscape recommend his relative literary endowments. However, he misses the potentials, innate in his own chosen form, the georgic, for clarifying the peculiar definitions that relate him to his poem and the poem's subject to its historical time and place. He fails to extract the deeper historicist and hermeneutic essence implanted in his own 'Sugar Cane', a historicism and hermeneutics that are demonstrably feasible, given the work of more successful georgic poets in particular and didactic poets in general.

In the strictest utilitarian terms, he proposed *The sugar cane* as a georgic describing – for the primary benefit of sugar planters – the topographical and economic conditions specific to St. Christopher and broadly common in other West Indian islands. But choosing poetry as his medium and georgic as his genre, he was forced to address technical complications that he clearly did not anticipate.

For Grainger, the problem of finding a voice to sing the sugar cane and a Muse to inspire that voice was a fundamental and pervasive one. The distinguished precedence of Virgil had authorized poetic compositions on agricultural themes as far back as 37 BC. A number of Grainger's own contemporaries had likewise written georgics on subjects such as 'The Hop Garden' (Smart, 1752), 'Agriculture' (Dodsley, 1754) and 'The Fleece' (Dyer, 1757). These and other subjects were altogether familiar to English experience, if not always harmonious with their assumptions about the fitness of untried or commonplace subjects for classic forms of discourse. In the matter of the sugar cane, however, Grainger had no precedence. Classical authors like Pliny (the Elder, A.D. 23-70) and Galen had barely heard about cane sugar; the Greeks and Romans appeared not to have used it before the seventh century A.D. (Deerr, 1949 I: 66). Grainger himself betrays a personal sense of unease about sugar as a subject for a polite author by adverting to the progressive pejoration of the term and its derivatives since the mid-seventeenth century. In some of the earliest lines of Book I, he extols the sugar cane in high panegyric strains as 'supreme of plants', but within another 150 lines he apologizes for the use of the term 'saccharize'. Although the use of sugar as a sweetener increased with the popularization of tea and coffee in the seventeenth century,³ ironically, towards the end of that same century, authors were becoming increasingly squeamish about the use of the word 'sugar' in polite discourse; the verbs 'to sugar', and 'to sugar over', as well as the derivatives 'sugared' and 'sugary' came to be used with pejorative connotations.⁴

Time and use would eventually nullify these specific objections, but Grainger had to resolve an even more central rhetorical dilemma: the problem of inventing a persona that could at once satisfy the diverse needs of a heterogeneous audience of actual or prospective sugar planters, gentleman farmers with poetic tastes, and purely literary types interested in the broader philosophical issues of farming.⁵ The experience of Virgil was not entirely helpful here. Although the political structure of Virgil's Rome, like West Indian plantation society, was rigidly stratified between masters and slaves, in his *Georgics* Virgil does not write primarily as a member of the master class, nor, like Grainger, as an expatriate: in his relationship to the land, he (Virgil) could invoke and identify with a clearly defined past, he could appropriate myths and traditions that were indigenous to his particular time and place; the land and its gods he could truly claim for his own. The case of James Grainger was altogether different. His relationship to the island of St. Christopher was that of an immigrant (an 'arrivant' in Edward Kamau Brathwaite's elastic phrase), a physician who had had greater success in England living off literature than medicine,

and now an estate doctor who would have preferred to be a planter if he had had the financial means.

The sugar cane, then, conceived and composed during his search for better economic circumstances in the New World, seemed at least partly intended to establish for James Grainger the public distinction that had eluded him both in medicine and letters. He therefore makes his georgic a speculative venture, an excursion into mercantilist poetics. Just as agriculture (the culture of the earth) is perhaps the purest (because the earliest) form of speculative activity, embodying, as it characteristically does, all the features of risk, investment, challenge, industry and diligence, so husbandry in Grainger's georgic becomes an allegory for enterprise in poetic composition that borrows all the above signs not primarily to extend the domain of poetry, but to increase the poet's stock in his own eyes as well as in those of his audience who might be disposed to assess his personal moral value on the criterion of this work. In the poem's preface, Grainger writes (emphasis mine): '*Though I cannot indeed say I have satisfied my own ideas in this particular* [i.e. 'enriching poetry with many new and picturesque images']: Yet I must be permitted to recommend the precepts contained in this poem. They are the children of truth, not of genius; the result of experience, not the productions of fancy. Thus, *though I may not be able to please*, I shall stand some chance of instructing the reader, which, as it is the nobler end of all poetry, so *it should be the principal aim of every writer who wishes to be thought a good man.*' The declarations emphasized are only secondarily expressions of rhetorical modesty. They suggest primarily that if generalized aesthetics or abstract morality were his principal aim, he might not have chosen georgic after all. Alternatively, he could have restricted himself to the practical aspects of sugar cane cultivation and the pictorial features of the landscape. The statements also reflect Grainger's sense of inadequacy about the finished work's capability to deliver the best that georgic had yielded at the hands of more able practitioners. That sense forces him to adopt a compensating strategy, a double-edge praxis, one edge to serve his own egoism, the other to serve the conventional moral ends of poetry.

Grainger's chief challenge, then, was to search for the proper form — a version of georgic capable of comprehending and revealing his own moral value as author of that form, and of winning acceptance for his proposal of a sugar cane plantation economy as the root of a new civilization, a mirror through which could be reflected prophetic images of England's future. In another sense, the issues which confronted him were analogous to those that entered into the debate about the proper method of translating the classics in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁶ Writing on this

subject, James Kinsley observes that both Dryden and Pope aimed to make Virgil and Homer speak good English, as though they were good Englishmen living in Restoration and Augustan London. From the outset, Grainger behaves like a poet who, preparing for a voyage to an exotic destination, places a classified ad for a Muse to serve as travelling companion and inspiration. His ad, as it may be reconstructed from his poem, might read like this: 'Required: one Muse to assist a physician-poet in composing a West Indian georgic; experience in foreign travel (especially to tropical loci) is essential; knowledge of plantation societies, especially those worked by black slaves is required; applicant must be congenial to Africa as well as to her sons enslaved in the West Indies.' The success of our fanciful ad is tellingly reflected throughout the text of *The sugar cane*. The hired muse proves curiously reluctant, if not downright sullen and uncooperative. The tropical heat of the West Indian climate seems to throw her into sustained bouts of somnolence, necessitating Grainger's frequent invocations. And no wonder: she is called upon variously to sing mosquitoes, sandflies and cockroaches (I, 334); to celebrate the native soils of 'deep dark mould with clay or gravel mix'd' (I, 217), to inveigh against monkeys and rats that devastate ripened crops; and to celebrate tropical storms during the hurricane season. As the poem proceeds and its scope enlarges, Grainger's enthusiasm and ambitions for his project grow also, but his Muse becomes overwrought by the ever-widening demands of the job description: some scenes of plantation slavery (the crack of the whip and the bite of the lash [III, 140ff]) become too grisly for her. In a fit of frustration, Grainger accuses the muse of perversity. He must increase his workforce. By Book IV, he is back in the Want Ads calling for another Muse, this time one well-disposed to Africans and knowledgeable enough about the terrain of the African continent to guide his footsteps on a whimsical journey there, and to support his own ambivalent sympathies for enslaved African humanity:

O attend my song (Genius of Africa)
 A Muse that pities thy distressful state;
 Who sees with grief, thy sons in fetters bound;
 Who wishes freedom to the race of man;
 Thy nod assenting craves: dread Genius, come!
 (IV, 13-17)

But within the small space of one stanza, we find Grainger uneasy again. Diffident about the qualifications of a native African Muse, he invokes a back-up European Muse, apparently to assuage his deepening anxieties over the problematics of a georgic on the sugar cane.

Elsewhere in the poem, the roles of Muse and poet become reversed. The subject matter is so novel and the poet's resolution so distracted, that Grainger's Muse proves either incompetent or unwilling to inspire his ambitions. Grainger takes to instructing the Muse (as a master tradesman might instruct an apprentice), in matters like tropical climate and tropical husbandry, matters decidedly beyond the Muse's ken.

Grainger is largely exact in his depictions of West Indian natural scenery and vegetation, particularly in his copious footnotes on the use of indigenous plants as food, and as herbs in the practice of tropical medicine. At his hands, the sugarcane (and tropical vegetation in general) gains the most extensive legitimacy ever conferred on them by any of his contemporaries in English letters. Sugar itself is elevated beyond its common household uses to the level of an elixir that 'dilates the soul with genuine joy', rum is described as 'heart-recruiting', and rum punch outstrips the best burgundies and champagnes of France:

For not Marne's flowery banks, nor Tille's green bounds
Where Ceres with the God of vintage reigns
In happiest union; not Vigornian hills,
Pomona's loved abode, afford to man
Goblets more priz'd or laudable of taste,
To slake parch'd thirst, and mitigate the clime.
(III, 501-506)

Adding together his own private gustatory delights, the planters' and traders' commercial profit and the sugar cane's aesthetic effects on the eye and on the landscape, Grainger transforms the sugar cane into a plant of total and ultimate utility. He finds much in the landscape to delight the eye, like this hillside prospect of huts built of reeds and covered with lush vegetation:

With plantanes, with banana's bosom'd-deep
That flutter in the wind: where frolic goats
Butt the young Negroes, while their swarthy sires,
With ardent gladness wield the bill; . . .
(III, 532-35)

Other objects and sensations enlarge the soul:

Yet musical those little insects' hum,
That hover round us and to Reason's ear
Deep, moral truths convey; while every beam
Flings on them transient tints, which vary when
They wave their purple plumes; . . .
(III, 568-72)

Up until now, Grainger has endeavored to transform St. Christopher into a *locus amoenus* (it is salubrious, fertile, prosperous) wherein could be realized a quasi-paradise providing leisure and recreation (the ideal of the retired life) and the material benefits of careful husbandry and ordered economy (the ideal of the active life in New World terms). By the last third of Book III, however, the tensions between these two ideals erupt into an open lament over the insufficiencies of the island. Grainger admits that St. Christopher's insularity effectively exiles him from his central cultural references, from those, like Samuel Johnson, William Shenstone and Thomas Percy, who could provide the intellectual stimulation he needed to harmonize the two ideals and make the paradise complete:

O, were ye all here,
 O, were ye here; with him my Paeon's son!
 Long-knownn, of worth approv'd, thrice candid soul!
 How would your converse, where mild wisdom tempers mirth;
 And charity, the petulance of wit;
 How would your converse polish my rude lays,
 With what new noble images adorn?
 Thence should I scarce regret the banks of Thames,
 All as we sat beneath that sand-box shade; . . .

(III, 513-22)

In addition, this lament registers his sense of discontinuity from his native tradition of letters; it resonates with the metropolitan's dread of being cut off from growth and change.

The verse itself appears sometimes to be straining to deny the landscape and its contents their indigenous character and shape, constraining West Indian nature to behave like English nature. The previously quoted passage (III, 501-506) extols the sugar-cane-derived beverages of rum and rum punch above the best traditional wines of Old World, but these drinks enjoy that distinction only in reference against others more familiar to the European palate. Such tensions pervade Book III; they serve as objective emblems of those conflicting impulses at work in the poem and in Grainger's consciousness, impulses which Grainger calls his 'thwarting sentiments'. Further inspection of the verse reveals the recurrence of certain grammatical and rhetorical patterns that seem to result directly from Grainger's divided consciousness. In a major passage following those elegiac lines to absent friends, we find five examples of litotes concentrated in thirty-seven lines. Ironically, this passage contains some of *The sugar cane's* best prospect poetry, but Grainger undercuts his considerable representation of St. Christopher's panoramic beauty by a compulsive resort to understatement. The plantation great-houses are described as 'neat though not lofty';

humbler slave dwellings, though fleetingly ennobled with an echo from Milton's *Comus* (they 'front the rising Sun'), are rated as 'not delightful'.⁷ Remarking the absence of classic birds (nightingales and larks) whose song conventionally charms the sense of poets, he seeks compensations in the sound of a cool, silvery stream and of the waves crashing on the seashore, only to find these 'not unmusical' (III: 561, 566). The choice of such rhetoric bespeaks less than complete satisfaction with the natural and social order he so much wants to legitimize.

By this point in the work, those initial intentions that were signalled in the preface are being transformed. It becomes clear that the poet-Muse dissonance evidenced repeatedly in the first three books springs from Grainger's frustrated attempts to manipulate the Muse into complicity in a dialectical strategy of vision and revision. The eye must record what it sees in deference to objective reality, but the mind, torn between the familiarity and persistence of Old World images and the inventive potentiality of the New World milieu, compulsively revises the scenery by such devices as arranged marriages (between the myrtle, the love plant of Italy, and the citron, the Grainger-appointed loveplant of St. Christopher [I, 550]), or the intermittent obtrusions of his own 'spots of time' where, in the midst of extolling the white purity of a flowering privet fence, he must compare it to snowdrifts on the Grampian mountains and thereby awaken an immediate nostalgia for past times and distant places: 'O might the Muse tread, flush'd with health, the Grampian hills again!' (515-519). This process of comparison and/or marriage of New World nature with Old World nature may be taken to represent a first-phase revision of Grainger's original systemic principle of cultural hierarchies. By that principle, the definition of colonial value, even in the undisputable domain of indigenous nature, must remain the prerogative of the metropole.

But historical truth opposes itself to the principle's momentum. In a sudden concessionary turn of the text's rhetoric, Grainger acknowledges the flawed logic of a cultural superiority based on the presumption of older historical consciousness. He begins to revise (indeed to reverse) his original basis for value to give priority to West Indian nature. By Book III he allows that that very European presumption would place European nature rather near the point of exhaustion, as, from his viewpoint at mid-century, he perceived it to stand thoroughly 'methodiz'd', 'pursued' 'through all her coyest ways and 'secret mazes' (III, 625-6). By contrast, West Indian nature, because still a novel idea to the European mind, stands fresh and abundant ('with savage loneliness, she reigns'). To give further emphasis to his discovery, he counterpoints some of the highest artistic achievements of Jones, Wren and Palladio. Against the natural beauty and elegance

of St. Christopher, these artists' works appear as mere artifice. The visual excellence of the royal palm, combined with the particular sensory pleasure afforded by the taste and smell of pineapples, mammey apples and tamarinds (IV, 496-533), proposes a West Indian aesthetic which supplants the European aesthetic in the new order of Grainger's vision.

Even though the text seems to theorize the sufficiency of the natural environment to support civilization, Grainger rationalizes the visionary order by imposing on it a built environment and a human social and political economy where power devolves from the metropolitan center to a benevolent Creole elite, and the sinews are supplied by contented African slaves. What he proposes is a comprehensive physical and cultural development plan. Slave huts were to be built nearest to the coastline surrounded by coconut trees or bay grape, or on landscaped upland slopes. For the recreation and enjoyment of the slaves, he recommends the staging of song and dance festivals on holidays, but with an unambiguous interdiction against the use of African drums, fearing no doubt their subversive communicative power.

His program goes further to include elements of social engineering. Slaves were to be dissuaded either by 'threats' or 'soothing arts' from extra-plantation romance; intra-plantation courtship and marriage would, he thought, conserve for economically profitable work the energies slaves would otherwise expend in walking long distances to tryst with mates. However compelling might be the vision of the West Indies providing the paradigm for a new order of civilization, it is evident that Grainger cannot accept the apocalyptic image of Europe in the throes of cultural decline; Grainger's next act appears to extend the pattern of revision but the revision is not as radical as he would wish his several audiences and himself to believe. The act recalls to the West Indies those absentee plantation owners and their wayward sons still beckoned by the myth of the Grand Tour and other rituals promising status and personal fulfilment. It promises that their creative energies could be more constructively employed as legislators, civil servants, soldiers, aesthetes – and even gourmets – in the pioneering work of evolving a new civilization, rather than frustrated in the pursuit of moribund dreams:

Say, is pre-eminence your partial aim?—
 Distinction courts you here; the senate calls.
 Here crouching slaves, attendant wait your nod:
 While there, unnoted, but for folly's garb,
 For Folly's jargon; your dull hours ye pass,
 Eclips'd by titles, and superior wealth.

(III, 580-85)

On the conscious level, Grainger purports to revise the existing metro-centric political arrangements by empowering a new Creole elite. What he achieves in fact is the displacement of the authentic resident Creole caretakers by a new class of Creole-born but European-acculturated men. The conflict illustrated in that process reflects a luminous irony: Grainger's divided consciousness provides the generative facility that allows the very Europe he wants the Creoles to reject to propel its presence into the new order.

The paradigm for the perfect example of Europeanized-Creole manhood was prefigured in Book II, in the mythicized romantic vignette of the two star-crossed lovers Junio and Theana. Grainger depicts Junio as a paragon of Creole gentility, proof positive that a slavocracy was capable of fostering virtue and steadfastness. Though he spent his young manhood studying and travelling in England and Europe, no beauty from those lands could supplant Theana in Junio's affections ('Nor long had absence yet effac'd her form; Her charms still triumph'd o'er Britannia's fair' [II, 443-44]). His childhood had been shaped by the tropical ethos of St. Christopher. His boyish rituals of courting Theana with gifts of coconuts and sapodillas show that his ideas of romantic duty were formed by local idioms and objects. Through them Grainger invents quite early in his poem a kind of tropical romance iconography that foreshadows the full cultural program of the later books.

If Junio exemplifies Creole virtue complemented by the intellectual experiences of Europe, Montano (Book I) represents English gentlemanhood tested and tried by adversity. He embodies and achieves everything Grainger wished he could be himself. Driven to exile in St. Christopher, Montano brings diligence and determined industry to exploiting and managing the resources of his New World estate; his munificence with his worldly goods wins him the respect of his neighbors; his paternal compassion earns him the love and obedience of his slaves (they are 'sturdy', 'Well-fed, well-cloth'd, all emulous to gain/Their master's smile, who treated them like men' [I, 609-611]). For the care he exercised in ordering the physical landscape around his property, Grainger adjudged him a 'friend to the woodland reign' (he planted tamarind groves, hedgerow-trees and cool cedars to shade the public way and provide protection from the sun's burning rays for slave and stranger alike). The presence of such an exemplar of liberal social ideals and thoroughgoing public-spiritedness provided Grainger with the paradigm of Creole yeomanry. In the microcosm of Montano and his estate we see the vindication of the West Indian slavocracy, the revisioning of St. Christopher into Grainger's ideal of a New World paradise: Montano is the perfect exemplification of the eighteenth-century

ideal of the active and the retired life; St. Christopher the perfect harmony of the busy plantation (prosperous and profitable) and the sylvan retreat (leisure-promoting and recreative).

Junio and Theana die heroically in each other's arms, the victims of family discord: 'One grave contains this hapless, faithful pair;/And still the cane-isles tell their matchless love' (II, 552-53). Montano dies peacefully from natural causes, delivering a charge to his son to carry on his liberal, philanthropy: 'His knell was rung. . . /And all the cane-lands wept their father lost' (I, 645-46).

Revision, then, functions in two major ways: First, it allows the audience whose absence Grainger regrets to see in verbal images what they cannot see in physical actuality. And secondly, it paints those images as he wishes they would want to see them, which is, as he wishes the images could exist. Yet, for all the idealism the Junio-Theana-Montano mythos suggests, Grainger's personal material aspirations and cultural impedimenta shackle his vision and so dilute the full potential of the poem.

A passage near the end of Book III illustrates this endemic divided purpose that consistently undermines the poem's moral vigor and betrays the poet's materialist proclivities as corrosive forces that impoverish the yield of an investment as bold as a West Indian georgic. In this direct address Grainger holds out the sulphur-laden, ore-rich caves of the St. Christopher mountainsides as inducements for absentee Creoles to exercise their minds in the pursuit of philosophy:

Leave Europe; there through all her coyest ways,
Her secret mazes, Nature is pursued:
But here with savage loneliness, she reigns. . .
'Heavens! what stupendous, what unnumber'd trees,
Stage above stage, in various number drest, . . .
Heavens! What new shrubs, what herbs with useless bloom
Adorn its channel'd sides; and, in its caves
What sulphurs, ores, what earths and stones abound!
There let Philosophy conduct thy steps,
For nought is useless made: 'with candid search
Examine all the properties of things;
Immense discoveries soon shall crown your toil,
Your time will soon repay. . .'

(III, 625 passim)

But the idea of offering such lucrative economic resources to a class of economic men in a mercantilist age as objects for philosophic reflection further aggravates Grainger's already fractured resolution, demystifying the announced high-seriousness of his project to a series of comic am-

biguities. This passage barely intimates some of the poem's deeper hermeneutic possibilities, but Grainger glimpses them only imperfectly. His vision is ephemeral, evanescent, flawed by the poet's perverse disposition to dissociate himself from the inherent logic of his work. In the succeeding lines of that passage, Grainger undermines his own moral authority by pleading that he cannot himself participate in that quest or intuit further its potential discoveries because of 'the cares of fortune'. This utterance signals a decisive shift in the direction of the poem that redefines its overall relationship to traditional georgic. The original terms of discourse are so altered that the cleavage between Grainger and his Muse and Grainger and his primary intentions is widened even further. The whole poem now becomes an object lesson in the uses of adversity.

At this juncture, another inversion of roles occurs. This time, poem displaces poet, as poem writes itself, directing Grainger to transmute the perils of imitation and the dilemmas of migrating the Muse into a whole new treatise on the interpretation of signs. Situated in a region where the succession of the seasons is not as clearly demarcated as in Northern latitudes, St. Christopher challenged Grainger's *a priori* assumptions with new signs for rain, new signs for planting (the moon here is no guide for planting the sugar-cane [I, 416, 475], new prophetic signs for Britain to revise its colonial philosophy and practice. This inchoate semiology prefigures new roles for both poet and Muse.

By Book IV, the idea of the possibility of a West Indian georgic about the sugar cane has fully set in train a process that subverts certain key eighteenth-century criteria for poetic methodology and widely accepted assumptions about the value of the received past in understanding unfamiliar phenomena. In a statement describing this methodology and these assumptions, Geoffrey Tillotson writes that the classical poetic mind invests the widest possible range of external phenomena with 'the tincture of [its] past experiences'; because that mind, unlike the nineteenth-century romantic's is not interested in the freshness of original response but in response at a much later stage: 'when the new has been welcomed by the old, when it has been accommodated to existing harmony' (Tillotson, 1959: 218).

The subliminal content of this georgic on sugar itself and the emergent idea of a sugar colony civilization upsets that whole classical scheme, effectively supplanting the textual and political regime Grainger was designing for this work. It provides instead a basis for hypothesizing far more creative engagements between empowered master class and powerless slaves. Grainger responds by theorizing about a system of order in which the metropole would surrender to the colonies its prerogatives of wielding power and dictating formal order. But, as he discovers, the New World

was only a construct of the European imagination; the essence or interiority of the place so designated resisted any harmonic integration with the designs of Old World hegemony.

The project ensures from the metropolitan audience respectability for the West Indian landscape and Creole civilization. But in abandoning the vision of revolutionary history forged by the poem's autonomic energy, Grainger fails to extract the deepest hermeneutic essence implanted in his own *The sugar cane*. This retreat from the poem's emergent power dilutes the author's achievement; the net result is a repudiation of georgic itself, a misappropriation of the form that finally asks of the work only that it serve the conventional moral ends of poetry, and of the reader only that he think the author a good man.

NOTES

1. All textual references to *The sugar cane* (including quotations) are to the first edition (1764). Although writers on eighteenth-century didactic poetry in general and English georgic in particular typically recognize Grainger and his poem, the two are still not very widely known and still less extensively critiqued. The most recent (and, thus far, considerable) discussion may be found in John Chalker 1969: (55- 64). After medical training and military service, Grainger set up an unsuccessful physician's practice in London where, in course of time, he made the acquaintance of such leading literary figures as Johnson, Goldsmith, Dodsley, Smollett and Percy. His other major works include verse translations of latin authors (Ovid's *Hero and Leander* [1758] and the poems of Tibullus and Sulpicia [1759] and *Bryan and Pareene* (1764), a ballad about West Indian life. Between May 1756 and May 1758, he made regular contributions to the *Monthly Review* on drama, poetry and medicine. Some further poems of his appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* (1758). In the Spring of 1759 he accompanied John Borryau, a young plantation heir, to St. Christopher where he met his wife-to-be and spent the next seven years living on the combined income from his practice as a doctor to estate families and slaves and from his own interests in slave-trading.

2. Johnson held Grainger in high personal esteem and greatly admired his latin verse translations. He had strong reservations, however, about *The sugar cane*. As a subject for serious discourse he thought the plant 'unpoetical', and reportedly derided Grainger's introduction of rats into the poem. Still, in an apparent attempt to win favorable reception for the work and to forestall hostile attacks from critics like Smollett (who had splenetically censured Grainger's translations of Tibullus and Sulpicia in the *Critical Review* of December 1758), Johnson co-authored with Thomas Percy a largely affirmative review of *The sugar cane* in *The London Chronicle* (July 1764). Motives of sympathy and personal affection aside, Johnson could not excuse Grainger for failing to repudiate the West Indian slavocracy in his poem. And so, consonant with Johnson's principled stand against slavery, he denounced that part of *The sugar cane* which revealed Grainger's complicity in a system that made a commerce of 'fellow-creatures'. For Grainger's relations with Johnson and Percy, see respectively James Boswell (1934) and Nichols (1848).

3. In early modern Europe sugar was used chiefly among the privileged classes as a sweetener in medicines and confectionery, as a preservative for fruits and as a flavoring for meats. Growing consumption of tea and coffee in the eighteenth century increased the demand for sugar. As the price fell, sugar consumption in this latter form spread rapidly among the lower classes. Valuable socio-historical information on this phenomenon may be found in Drummond, J-C, A. Wilbraham & D. Hollingsworth (1957), and in a more specialized anthropological article by Sidney Mintz (1978).
4. The following 17th and 18th century usages, documented in OED, illustrate the problem: 'sugared': 'having an attractive outward appearance' (closely synonymous with current usage of 'sugar-coated') and 'sugary': 'deliciously or alluringly sweet, honeyed, deceitfully or flatteringly pleasant, excessively or offensively sweet'.
5. This difficulty of narrowly specializing the audience for an eighteenth-century georgic was not peculiar to Grainger. For a discussion of the diversity, the mind and interests of the period's georgic audience, see Geoffrey Tillotson (1959).
6. Kinsley 1961: viii.
7. This is an enigmatic phrase which I can only construe, in harmony with the dominant contextual tone of the passage, to mean 'not giving *full* delight or *great* pleasure, but not entirely lacking in those essential qualities' (quotes and emphasis mine). OED documents an obsolescent usage of 'delightful' which yields the opposite positive meaning from which I extrapolate here.

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Haitian economy: man, land and markets. MATS LUNDAHL. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983. 290 pp. (Cloth US\$ 27.50)

The Swedish development economist Mats Lundahl is well known among Caribbeanists and Haiti specialists for his 1979 book, *Peasants and poverty: a study of Haiti*. In that work he offered his readers a rounded and well-documented account of Haiti's contemporary economy, set in the context of that country's social and economic history. The work was informed by a thoughtful but pessimistic assessment of Haiti's future, and the view that Haiti's difficulties, compounded by a serious and growing poverty of resources, were to be laid squarely at the door of her governments. Critics found his analysis insufficiently sensitive to the internal values and strengths of Haitian peasant culture on the one hand, and to external (geopolitical, imperialist) influences on the Haitian economy, on the other. At the same time, most readers were impressed by the thoroughness of the documentation the author provided.¹

In the book under review, Lundahl gives us fourteen essays, three of them previously unpublished, which deal with issues raised in his earlier book, or by critics and observers. This book is divided into four parts, each consisting of three or four essays; the parts are entitled "Interpretations of Haiti", "Man and land", "Space and markets", and "Change and stagnation". No review can deal adequately with all of this material. But a few remarks may be offered, perhaps particularly since these essays appeared before the fall of the Duvalier regime, and the subsequent emergence of the "hardened vacuum" that has replaced it.

Part III, entitled "Space and markets", consists of three essays on

marketing in Haiti. The last is concerned with price series correlations, but since the data on which the correlations rest are, in Lundahl's own view, not entirely reliable, this essay is largely an exercise. The middle essay deals with Christian Girault's fine monograph on coffee marketing, *Le commerce du café en Haïti*; and though Lundahl differs quite sharply with Girault over the influence and relative independence of the *spéculateurs*, or rural-based coffee buyers, he is justifiably impressed by Girault's careful research.

This question of *spéculateur* power over coffee-producing peasants is a worrisome one. There may be a good deal of local or regional variation, in fact. But the needed information is, in any case, devilishly difficult to collect; local people have long been cautious about talking openly in regard to such matters, particularly to strangers. This reviewer is inclined to side with Girault, but only because of a general — now entirely outdated — familiarity with the Haitian countryside, where a good deal of coercion and control, mostly invisible to the outsider, was matter-of-factly exerted over the peasantry, in past years. Lundahl doubts that collusion among *spéculateurs* can work, when there are so many. While it is convincing that increases in the number of marketers can complicate the maintenance of oligopsony, it is not convincing to shift this argument, sometimes used to describe the situation of Haitian market women, to Haitian *spéculateurs*; the buying and selling operations are qualitatively different, involve different time periods, different scales of credit and purchase, and much else that makes the cases unlike. Nor is it convincing to say, as Lundahl does (p. 182), that "if collusion [among *spéculateurs*] had been effective, there would not have been any need to resort to" small-scale cheating (e.g., bad scales). Since when do greedy folk forgo one kind of cheating simply because another kind works? The late Prof. William Gates, with whom the reviewer did some work in the Haitian countryside in the late 1950s, was convinced that peasants could pick and choose their coffee buyers, and describes a *spéculateur* nervously pursuing a peasant seller who is choosing to take his coffee elsewhere. But there are many contexts within which such a situation might arise, without signifying the freedom of peasants to sell their coffee where they wished. At any rate, the real answer to this issue rests with fieldwork, plain and simple; and probably both Girault and Lundahl would concede that we need to know even more.

The opening essay in this section, "The state of spatial economic research on Haiti: a selective survey", first appeared in an anthropological journal. It reviews briefly and in passing research on the Haitian nation, on particular regions of Haiti, and on agricultural marketing and migration. Lundahl concludes that our knowledge in these areas is still quite imperfect, and

that more research is needed — an assertion with which one can readily agree. But it would be hard to demonstrate that adequate research findings have much to do with economic reform in Haiti. Haitian governments can stay in power because external forces agree to their tenure. The domestic policies of such governments are arbitrary because there is no need for them not to be. In regard to the marketing system, for instance, we have long known that Haitian food marketers operated under crushing and regressive tax policies. In 1959, this reviewer wrote:

“In Haiti today...the market woman is taxed for tethering her beast; for butchering a pig, sheep, goat or cow; for the stand on which pork is displayed for sale; for the grass roof beneath which wares are spread; and for the assessed values of the wares themselves; not to mention the license fees which are paid to permit dealing in certain products. Selling must not take place outside the market limits; resellers who buy within these limits are taxed for what they buy. Attempts have even been made by past governments to suppress many rural markets in order to concentrate activity in urban centers, and townsmen have circulated petitions for the crushing of rural markets.” (Mintz 1959)

None of this was news in 1959, though it may not have been known by the average middle-class dweller in Port-au-Prince. When Duplan and La Gra studied the taxation of agricultural goods in Port-au-Prince, they reported (in 1974) “that the taxation system was totally arbitrary, and that it led to abuses by the tax collectors,” Lundahl tells us. Their study was “highly successful in the sense that it led to suppression of these taxes by presidential decree in 1974” (p. 162). But surely it was not for lack of information that it took fifteen years to eliminate grossly unjust and economically inefficient levies on the marketers, many of them peasants. Lundahl knows as well as I do that the decision to remove these taxes was as arbitrary as the taxes were. Such taxes contributed not a penny to the improvement of marketing, actively retarding its development instead. The taxes were not retained merely to provide a dole to the droves of pathetic *petits fonctionnaires* — whom the peasants call “*léta*” — who wandered through the marketplaces, extorting pennies from ten year-old bean sellers. One suspects that the report by Duplan and La Gra does not explain why they were ended, either. Basic economic information does not become a lever for policy in Haiti, any more than in most other poor countries, because policy changes involve too much stepping on toes. But only Haitian toes? This reviewer thinks not. Haiti’s long and dismal history of the foreign presence — at least as dismal since 1915 as it was before — includes such spectacular economic innovations as selling human blood, meat packing for export, monopoly privileges for flour mills owned by Texan business geniuses, and like feats. To be sure, without the blessing of the regime in power, none of these neat schemes would have worked.

But is it confidence in sovereignty, or lack of such confidence, that leads governments to bless such shameless plots with impunity? It was also the regime in power, after all, which gave the U.S. a badly needed vote at Punta del Este. This is emphatically not a contention that we do not need more data because it might not be used, nor an assertion that marketing reform can only be carried out under conditions of absolute political independence. But the externalities do have a way of imposing themselves upon local political life, all the same.

In his final essay on technological change in Haitian agriculture (not yet printed elsewhere at the time), Lundahl considers what is needed to introduce technological innovations to the peasantry, innovations that might actually alter the fatal asymmetry of power typifying Haitian history, and concludes that such change can only come with the active cooperation of the government. But what if the government refuses to initiate the necessary changes, because it sees them as contrary to its interests? Is there, then, some way around the government? Lundahl enumerates several opinions in this regard — those of Clague, Maguire, Friedmann, and Pierre-Charles — and decides that they all fall short. This reviewer sadly agrees. Lundahl writes: “The Duvalier dynasty has ruled the nation autocratically since 1957 and as it will probably continue to do so for some time the government definitely has the power to stop all changes which it deems undesirable — for whatever reasons” (p. 280). One has to ask the question — not necessarily directed at Lundahl — concerning the seeming paralysis which grips Haiti today, now in the absence of the Duvalier dynasty. Lundahl has not been attracted by the thesis that some part of Haiti’s underdevelopment is a consequence of regional geopolitics; but it is difficult to believe that the present impasse has arisen merely as the result of divided local power. Are we to conclude simply that while Duvalier is gone, the local system he represented — what local system did he represent — is still firmly in place?

Lundahl has amply demonstrated the seriousness of purpose he brings to the study of the Haitian economy. While this *recueil* will not appeal to lay readers, and while its author’s preference for one kind of economics is plain, it provides much food for thought, as well as the solidly documented and careful analyses we have learned to expect of this scholar.

NOTE

1. A poignant note is afforded by a news story appearing immediately following the sudden departure of M. le Prés. Jean-Claude Duvalier et Cie. for an extended stay in France. In the flotsam and jetsam left behind on the lawn of one of the Duvalier residences after the frenzied looting which followed the fall of the Duvaliers, a reporter found a copy of Lundahl’s *Peasants and poverty*. Was Ti-Doc having second thoughts?

REFERENCE

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Essays on Haitian literature. LÉON-FRANÇOIS HOFFMANN. Washington D.C.: Three Continents Press, 1984. 184 pp. (Cloth US\$ 17, Paper US\$ 8)

The Haitian writer is caught in a web of paradoxes which involves problems of language, literacy, socio-political change and cultural identity. The writer cannot reach his or her public. His work is accessible only to the small, educated elite that speaks French. This dilemma is complicated by the fact that even when the writer uses Créole, the language spoken by the entire population, massive illiteracy makes the vernacular as transcribed into written language inaccessible to the general public. Moreover, the writer who engages in issues involving socio-political change is confronted with the contradiction of message and audience, *i.e.*, his readers are precisely the group most heavily interested in preserving the *status quo*. No longer do we understand the problem to be that of writing in French but, rather, that of the relationship of the writer to his audience. No longer is it a question of Haitian writers adopting a certain tradition or form of literature which reflects or imposes the sensibilities of a different history and culture, namely French. Generations of Haitian writers have incorporated into their texts the spoken language and the cultural and national experiences of the Haitian people. Nevertheless, the problem of literacy appears to be overwhelming. The peculiar problems confronting the Haitian writer are addressed by Léon-François Hoffmann, Professor of modern languages and literatures at Princeton University, in his *Essays on Haitian literature*, a collection of essays, some of which were previously published in French or English. In his introduction, Hoffmann notes that from the War of independence (1791-1803), "the first time a Napoleonic army had ever been defeated, a fact still carefully kept out of French history school books" to the Duvalierist era and the *tontons macoutes*, which fulfilled the Western media's hunger for "picturesque as well as sinister" scenarios, the image

of Haiti, the first Black Republic of the western hemisphere, has been largely negative. Further, the Hollywood image of the *vodun* religion, with its macabre and unrealistic associations, reinforced this image in the western imagination. Haiti's literature has been similarly misunderstood, or worse, simply ignored, although Haitians, per ratio to the population of the country, have published more books since the beginning of the nineteenth century than any other country in the Americas, except the U.S. It is Hoffmann's expressed purpose to produce a work which will counterbalance these unflattering images.

In the first chapter, "Haitian literature: an overview", Hoffmann underlines that the main themes of Haitian writers, whether novelists, poets, essayists, or playwrights, continue to be Haiti and her problems, thus falling within the tradition of committed literature or *littérature engagée*: "Their self-imposed mission is two-fold: on the one hand, to denounce injustices and abuses in Haitian society; on the other, to celebrate their country and defend her against the vicious sarcasm, often racist in character, which foreigners have all too often directed at the Black Republic" (p. 13). This basic, paradoxical characteristic lends Haitian literature originality within the Western literary tradition and is perhaps most evident in the novel: in early Haitian literature (pre-1915) characterized by historical and sentimental drawing-room novels; in the *indigenist* movement (1915-55) characterized by the peasant novel; and in the contemporary period (post 1955) characterized by "marvellous realism" in the novel. Hoffmann sees the concept of "marvellous realism," popularized by Jacques Stephen Alexis and later modified by Haitian novelists living generally in exile, as expressive of "the francophonic branch of Latin American literature".

In the book's best and most original essay, Hoffmann examines "The linguistic situation in Haiti" and studies the paradox of a country where only 10% of the population speak French, the official language of the nation, while 100% speak Créole, a language which is "as different from French as French is from Latin". Hoffmann argues that "Haitian Créole is in no way an inferior, simplified or bastardized form of French, as the ruling class has long claimed" but, rather, "an original, complex, and expressive language which no speaker of French can hope to understand and speak without much study and practice" (p. 33). Hoffmann, a native of France who has spent years studying the Créole language, has a first hand understanding of the problems involved. Hoffmann notes that "the originality of Haitian literature written in French rests to a considerable degree on Créole. This apparent paradox is due to two related factors: on the one hand, the presence of Créole within French texts, and, on the other hand, the influence of Créole on French texts" (p. 41). Despite

a brilliant analysis, reinforced by pertinent examples, of the unique contributions to literature achieved by that approach, and despite a similarly impressive review of Haitian works written in Creole, what emerges from this chapter is the author's evident concern about the effects of the dual language structure in Haiti, which effectively cuts off the majority of the population from full participation in the educational, political and economic apparatus of the country. The Haitian who only *speaks* Créole is, in effect, unable to appreciate the literary advances of his compatriots, whether the latter write in French or in Créole. In his outcry against this phenomenon, Hoffmann joins a large group of progressive Haitians, living in Haiti and abroad, who have long demanded parity of French and Creole as official languages, and indeed, have insisted that Creole should replace French as the official language. Hoffmann deplores the fact that the educational reform of 1979 only "permits" rather than "imposes" the use of Créole in public schools, notes that more Haitians are fluent in English than they are in the official language of their country, and even speculates on the possibility of a gradual replacement of French by English and an eventual Créole-English bilingualism. His hope for future coherence of the multilingual situation in Haiti is echoed by all who are genuinely concerned about the citizenry of Haiti.

In the next two chapters, Hoffmann examines "Slavery and race in Haitian letters" and "The U.S. and Americans in Haitian letters". The term "blanc" (white) in Haiti applies to foreigners, regardless of color or race. This phenomenon dates back to the first constitution of 1804, when Dessalines, the first ruler of the independent republic, decreed that all Haitians, no matter what their color, were to be referred to as "black". This applied as well to German and Polish *émigrés* who were living in Haiti at the time.¹ Hoffmann points out that foreigners in Haitian literature tend to be French, Caucasian characters, used by Haitian writers as mouthpieces to expose the color prejudice between Blacks and Mulattoes that continue to threaten to divide the nation. They function as objective observers of reality. American foreigners, virtually absent from Haitian literature before the American occupation (1915-34), emerge as racist, imperialist and materialistic in the literature of the indigenist movement. But the Harlem Renaissance rendered the U.S., in the eyes of Haitians, a place where black writers and artists were supported by progressive whites. Objective and sensitive studies by Melville Herskovits, James Leyburn and Katherine Dunham also impressed the Haitians with the fact that not all foreign critics were intent on denigrating the country. Further, in the wake of Haitian emigration, the U.S. came to represent a land where freedom and even spiritual aspirations could be satisfied. Accordingly the

representation of Americans and the U.S. were upgraded in Haitian literature. Hoffmann offers the example of Marie-Thérèse Colimon's *Le chant des sirènes* [*The song of the sirens*] (Port-au-Prince: Ed. du Soleil, 1979) in which all the protagonists escape from Haiti's confining social situation for the promise of a better life abroad in the United States, "the Promised Land". Finally, Hoffmann notes the increasing use of English phrases offered without translation in a number of contemporary texts written by Haitians living at home and abroad, a phenomenon he sees as indicative of the increasing popularity of the English language in Haiti.

In "The image of woman in Haitian poetry," Hoffmann discusses once more the paradox which confronts the Haitian writer: the poet wants to praise the beauty of his country's black women but finds it difficult to depict the black woman positively because the terms available to express her physical appearance, such as "kinky" or "woolly" hair, black skin, and negroid facial features, have negative connotations in Créole, French and English. The paradox becomes more evident when the poet attempts to describe the white woman who appears rarely in Haitian poetry. The poet finds it difficult to sing of the white woman's golden hair, white skin and Arian features without seeming, indirectly, to denigrate the black Haitian woman. His poetry would no longer be "committed". Therefore, "for Haitian poets, Black Woman represents Africa and White Woman represents Europe, before the fusion of which Haiti was born" (p. 100). This paradoxical way of resolving this dilemma is also underlined in the book's final chapter on "The first Haitian novel: Emeric Bergeaud's *Stella*" (Paris: Dentu, 1859). In *Stella*, the two main female protagonists are "l'Africaine," an African slave woman who is killed in the first pages of the novel by her French master, and Stella, a young French woman who aids the African woman's two sons in avenging their mother's death. Later, Stella encourages the two sons, the Black Romulus and the Mulatto Rémus, to unite and transcend their color prejudice in order to develop a strong, independent nation: "L'Africaine and Stella, Haiti and Liberty, are thus fused into one symbolic character who preaches struggle against oppression and the unity which will be the mainstay of the nation" (p. 116). Finally, Hoffmann returns to his original thesis by pointing out that Bergeaud's main "obsession", as with all other Haitian writers', is to articulate "a passionate affirmation of Haiti's originality and dignity".

The book also includes a lengthy and impressive bibliography of critical studies on Haitian literature. In perusing the bibliography, one cannot help but notice the rarity of books in English devoted to the study of Haitian letters. In this regard, along with J. Michael Dash's *Literature and ideology in Haiti, 1915-1961* (London: Macmillan Press, 1981), Hoff-

mann's text represents a valuable contribution to the field and fills an important gap. It is hoped, however, that the book will interest not only researchers and scholars writing in English outside of the country, but also those Haitians who are attempting to rebuild the nation within a democratic framework after the severe and rigid dictatorship of the Duvaliers (1957-86) in which we saw the originality of Haitian literature paradoxically expressed solely by those Haitians living abroad—the only ones, sadly, who were able to enjoy freedom of speech.

NOTE

1. See David Nicholls, 1979. *From Dessalines to Duvalier: race, colour and national independence in Haiti*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

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The Haitian journal of lieutenant Howard, York Hussars, 1796-1798. Edited with an introduction by ROGER NORMAN BUCKLEY. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985. liv + 194 (Cloth US\$ 22.50).

Lieutenant Howard of the York Hussars kept a daily journal during the last two years of the British occupation of western Saint Domingue—the future Haiti—from 1793 to 1798. Roger Buckley has published this 130-page journal with an extensive introduction and thorough annotation. It is a book that can be read with profit by scholar and layman alike.

A young English cavalry officer convoyed to the West Indies from Cork in the winter of 1796 might not be expected to be an astute analyst of social conditions in the famous sugar colony in the throes of a massive slave revolt. Indeed, on the surface much of this journal deals with military maneuvers and patrols, ambushes and skirmishes, and brief descriptions of the ports and hinterland of that war-torn island. A more careful reading, however, reveals a great deal more, not only about the fighting qualities of Toussaint L'Ouverture's ex-slave detachments and of the constant preoccupation of the English regiments with lethal yellow fever, but also about the society of Saint Domingue and the causes and course of the famous Black Revolution. Naturally, we see all this through Lieutenant Howard's myopic vision and inevitable prejudices as an English officer

who had made his way up from the ranks, as a Conservative of Burkean stamp, and as a white member of England's "educated middle class".

Most interesting is Howard's description of the "six classes" on Saint Domingue which are not very different from those analyzed by eighteenth-century French observers from Moreau de Saint-Mery to Hilliard d'Auberteuil, including many of their caricatures and oversimplifications. Howard is not flattering to either the French planters or to the administrative and military establishment, but he is especially critical of the *petits blancs*—artisans and mechanics, plantation overseers and accountants, adventurers and gamblers, "totally devoid of Principles" (102). Not unexpectedly, he condemns the *petits blancs* more for their social pretensions among the white population than for their implacable racism toward both black slaves and mulatto freedmen. The lieutenant perceives that not all the freedmen (*affranchis*) were People of Colour—the majority were Free Blacks—and he discerns tensions among the freedmen based on their degree of "whiteness". He praises the beauty of the *mulâtresses* with their Madras kerchiefs, "the tint of their different Complexions," and their "most Luxurious shape" (104). Toward the "Men of Colour" he was less partial. "A Mulatto is capable of anything but Honor, Virtue, and Humanity", he writes. As for the Free Black, he is "in general a harmless inoffensive creature" (105). Finally, the Hussar officer turns to the mass of black slaves—almost 500,000 of them in 1789. Here Howard admits a change of mind from his original rage at the "Lash Sound over the Back of a Negro". Comparing the treatment of black slaves by white masters *favorably* to that of the poor in England under the criminal law, Howard summarily concludes that "if in England . . . , you punish free Men, will you not allow a Master to punish his slaves when they are in fault"? (108) Moreover, a Master is too greedy to harm his human capital.

Lieutenant Howard's journal is a compendium of all shades of racism from sexual attitudes to allusions to African primitivism—providing a rationalization for relentless repression "by the saber" of the "black brigands". His explanation of the Black Revolution on the island combines a version of Burkean political philosophy with undisguised racism. The French Revolution of 1789 infected the slaves with the idea of the *Rights of Man* and absurd "Levelling Principles". With patent shock and disbelief, Howard asserts that the French revolutionary commissioners (he does not mention Léger-Félicité Sonthonax by name) "not only gave the Blacks their Freedom, but put arms into their hands" (77). He failed to add that the English and Spanish armies were allies of the white planter élite called upon to maintain slavery. In a passage reminiscent of Burke's *Reflections on the French revolution*, Howard evokes "Murder, Assassi-

nation, Rape, and Robbery" as the "Order of the Day" on the island, for which the ex-slaves alone are responsible (78). For Lieutenant Howard, the "Enormities committed in Honour of the *Rights of Man*" are never weighed against that greater enormity, a century of slavery. In 1796, only the whites are "wretched" and worthy of sympathy. Howard cannot even understand why the mulatto and black troops in Abercromby's expeditionary force began deserting to Toussaint as the British occupation army, decimated by fever and sickness, prepared to withdraw.

The Black Revolution on Haiti had its contingencies and its preconditions. It was a unique event in Western History, not because it was black, but because it was successful. Historians may legitimately debate which factors were decisive in the final outcome—the Abolitionist Movement, the French Revolution, international conflict, the leadership and organizational skills of Toussaint L'Ouverture and the other black leaders, the high morale of the black soldier, yellow fever and malaria, so devastating to the European regiments. In the end, it seems fruitless to separate out any *one* of these factors as the editor is inclined to do. Nor does it do injustice to the determination and skill of the black detachments to set their success in a wider international and environmental context.

Although I do not share the editor's belief that Howard's journal contributes much to a "comprehensive assessment of Toussaint L'Ouverture as a military leader" (xiii), I do agree that it adds something to our knowledge of the English army in the 1790's and to overall English war strategy. However, even more important is the light Howard's journal sheds on the range of racial attitudes of a middle-class English officer, fighting to reimpose slavery during part of that agonizing thirteen-year struggle ending in Haitian independence.

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Los Estados Unidos y Trujillo, año 1930. BERNARDO VEGA. Santo Domingo: Fundación Cultural Dominicana, 1986. 2 vols. xi + 1120 pp. (Paper)

Los Estados Unidos y Trujillo, año 1947. BERNARDO VEGA. Santo Domingo: Fundación Cultural Dominicana, 1984. 2 vols. xi + 1018 pp. (Paper)

Nazismo, fascismo y falangismo en la Republica Dominicana. BERNARDO VEGA. Santo Domingo: Fundación Cultural Dominicana, 1985. 415 pp. (Paper)

The polyfacetic Bernardo Vega has, with the volumes reviewed here, undertaken a formidable task of historical excavation on Dominican history and U.S.-Dominican relations. Vega, an economist, former Governor of the Central Bank of the Dominican Republic (an appointment that delayed the publication of several of these volumes by several years), and archaeologist, has now turned his attention to the roles of historian and archivist. Through the vehicle of his own Fundación Cultural Dominicano (FCD), Vega is compiling, editing, analyzing and publishing materials from U.S. State Department and military archives as well as a variety of other sources not easily available to the public. Vega says that the entire project will include the recovery and publication of these documents from the mid-19th century to the present. The first phase of this project will focus exclusively on the Trujillo period (1930-1961). This is an important task because of the lack of internal documentation on the Trujillo period. Newspapers did not report what was really going on, Trujillo's private papers were taken out of the country in 1962, and those historical participants still living have not rushed to write their memoirs. The informational vacuum in which the average Dominican lived and the informational vacuum left behind lead Vega to refer to the Trujillo period as a "Middle Ages without monasteries".

Besides the volumes reviewed here, the FCD has published to date two volumes with commentary and documents from U.S. military and diplomatic archives for 1945/46. In addition to the yearly volumes, the FCD will be publishing several volumes that cover specific themes that do not fit conveniently into the annual volumes. One of these themes, the introduction of Nazi ideologies into the Dominican Republic, is reviewed here and others are promised on subjects such as the foreign debt and the use of Washington lobbyists by Trujillo. Although the documents and Vega's accompanying analysis do not appear to introduce any major changes into the historical record, and many have been drawn upon before (Crassweller 1966; Wilson and Atkins 1972), they do provide rich detail not easily available before now.

The two volumes on the year of Trujillo's ascension to the Presidency include seven essays by Vega on various aspects of the events of that year as well as a large collection of documents from diplomatic and military sources, including the private papers of the principal U.S. diplomats involved, and documents from the archives of the Dominican National Palace. All of the major events are well covered: Trujillo's use of Rafael Estrella Ureña as his stalking horse in the "February Revolution," his violent suppression of his political opponents, the fraudulent elections of May 16, Trujillo's swearing-in on August 16, his reactions to the devastation

of the hurricane of San Zenón, and the beginnings of the Dominican Party, his mechanism of rule throughout the thirty-one years. Trujillo was able to take advantage of the increasing unpopularity of Horacio Vázquez, the first democratically elected President after the end of the U.S. military occupation in 1924, to plot his way into power. Vázquez had extended his term of office from four to six years, began issuing stamps with his likeness on them, and naming streets after himself. While certainly a minor case of megalomania compared to the heights of self-aggrandizement that Trujillo would reach, Vázquez progressively alienated his bases of support. Trujillo's ability to manipulate Estrella Ureña into thinking that he (Estrella Ureña) was using Trujillo when quite the opposite was true is notable since these documents reveal that Estrella Ureña was no slouch in the treachery business himself. In October of 1929, he had hatched against Vázquez an assassination plot that failed when they were not able to find a willing assassin. One candidate for the job, who earlier in the century had assassinated President Ramón Cáceres, apparently had had enough of solving the succession problem and declared "One President already died at my hands and I don't want to kill another one."

In one essay Vega expertly sketches in U.S. policy towards Latin America during the period, which was mostly dedicated to trying to get out of the various Caribbean Basin countries in which the U.S. had landed troops over the previous thirty years. This made it an inauspicious historical moment for those Dominicans who fervently hoped the U.S. would do something forceful to stop Trujillo. The reporting of U.S. Minister Charles B. Curtis was consistently negative until late in 1930 when he began commenting favorably on Trujillo's "unsuspected administrative ability". However, just as consistently, the U.S. State Department declined to do anything definitive to impede Trujillo's power grab and even authorized the sale of machine guns to him after the fraudulent May 16 elections, in part because of the consistent support given to Trujillo by the U.S. military, who saw him as one of their prize pupils. But a sample of critical reporting can be found in the characterizations of Trujillo's first cabinet, which referred to the Secretary of the Presidency as a "mulatto assassin", the Minister of Justice as the "most slippery intriguer in Dominican politics", the Finance Secretary as a "half-wit," and the War Minister as an "illiterate Syrian." Trujillo wasted no time in consolidating power, and the interested reader can find the documentation for the beginnings of the Dominican Party, Trujillo's electoral vehicle throughout his reign. He first proposed a "partido único" on October 4, 1930 with only Desiderio Arias, who would be killed by Trujillo a few years later, protesting. A shortlived anti-Trujillo rebellion ended with the death of Cipriano Bencosme on November 9, 1930.

In the volume on 1947, besides the sources utilized in the 1930 volume, Vega also samples the archives of the Dominican Foreign Ministry, a collection of clippings supplied to Vega by an anti-Trujillo exile, some of Trujillo's personal correspondence from that year, and materials from the U.S. Legation in Cuba concerning the would-be invaders at Cayo Confites. Trujillo, in the 17th year of his rule, was a busy man, showing little flagging of his energy. In that year he was able to convince the U.S. to begin sellings arms to him again (an embargo had been initiated in 1945), plotted to overthrow his arch-enemy Rómulo Betancourt of Venezuela and successfully convinced the U.S. to pressure Cuba to stop the launching of an anti-Trujillo invasion from Cayo Confites in Cuba. There is a tremendous amount of documentation available here on the failed and, at the time, well-publicized invasion. For those who wish to clarify sequences of events in this confusing episode, Vega has helpfully supplied a table listing events that occurred on each day in July, August and September 1947 in Cayo Confites, Havana, Santo Domingo, the U.S., Haiti, and Venezuela. Cayo Confites is important in Caribbean history since this was the first effort of the fabled, loose-knit group that would become known as "the Caribbean Legion" and would have greater insurrectionary success in Costa Rica in support of José Figueres in 1948. This volume also contains seven interpretative essays by Vega, as well as a wealth of relevant documentation.

Right-wing ideologies found acceptance in high circles in the Dominican Republic, but interest in the Axis was always strongly tempered by Trujillo's appreciation that his ultimate fate lay with the United States. Vega's series of essays in *Nazismo, fascismo y falangismo* analyze Trujillo's ideological affinities with fascism, nazism, and falangism, and discusses the role of these ideologies in the 1930s and 40s. For this volume, besides consulting several U.S. archives (including those of the OSS) and the archives of the Dominican National Palace, Vega also made use of German archives. Dominican exile leaders frequently tried to convince the U.S. that Trujillo was a secret Nazi sympathizer, but Trujillo was too cagey for them to ever have any concrete evidence. Germany had historically been an important trading partner and some of the principal families of the Cibao had sent their children to Germany to be educated. Germany evinced an interest beyond the commercial in the Dominican Republic during the period. In 1937 the German-Dominican Scientific Institute opened its doors and busied itself ostensibly surveying flora, fauna, and geology in diverse parts of the countries. Vega concludes that the Institute was indeed collecting data for the German intelligence services on subjects such as the usefulness of mountainous Constanza as a telecommunications center and the Bay

of Samaná as a refuge for German ships and submarines. German groups also expressed interest in iron ore in the Hatillo area and petroleum in Azua.

But however well Trujillo thought of the Axis, geopolitical realities dictated an allegiance to the United States. This allegiance was sealed by a trip to Washington in 1939, his first foreign trip at the age of 48, where he managed a brief private meeting with Roosevelt, despite the professed displeasure of the State Department, habitually ambivalent about Trujillo. But Trujillo was greeted far more warmly by the U.S. military. Trujillo's chief in the Dominican National Police, Colonel Breckenridge, was by then a Marine Corps General presiding over Quantico. Breckenridge sponsored a reception where Trujillo met several U.S. military luminaries. This visit impressed Trujillo and when war broke out he imprisoned and deported some 48 Germans, and during the war German submarines sank several Dominican ships. The volume on the events of 1930 also discusses the somewhat longer history of fascism in the Dominican Republic. Particularly notable is the fact that Rafael Estrella Ureña, who had served as Vásquez's ambassador to Italy where he reportedly became a great admirer of Mussolini's, began organizing fascist clubs in the Dominican Republic upon his return. It seems as if the country had few good options in 1930.

Vega has been surpassingly helpful for Dominicans, Dominicanists and students of U.S.-Latin American relations in general. Among other helpful features the volumes also contain name indexes so that the interested reader can follow particular historical personages through the events in questions. With the publication of these volumes and the magisterial analysis of the Trujillo period by Roberto Cassá (1982), much of the lost knowledge about the Trujillo period would seem to have been recovered for future generations. In order to assure that all of the FCD's volumes on the Trujillo period do achieve publication and for the sake of scholarship, it is to be hoped that Bernardo Vega receives no more calls to public service until the series is completed.

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The impact of intervention: The Dominican Republic during the US occupation of 1916-1924. BRUCE J. CALDER. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984. 358 pp. (Cloth US\$ 22.50)

A sense of *déjà vu* seeps through the pages of what must by any judgment be the most authoritative book on the US occupation of the Dominican Republic during America's formal interventionist heyday. It is all there: a profound misunderstanding of the Dominican social structure and political culture; colonial and racist practices by, for the most part, an insensitive military government which equalled those practiced by British and French colonial administrations elsewhere in the Third World which were denigrated by officially anti-colonialist Washington; a refusal to permit discussion of US hegemony in the Caribbean Basin and its manifestation in practice at the Versailles Conference which was dominated by Wilson's espousal of national selfdetermination and democracy; a lack of any coherent policy in the corridors of power in either Washington or Santo Domingo bar the need for 'public order, "clean" administration, sanitation and infra-structure, executed with little local consultation; a bitterly fought guerrilla war and US Marine Corps atrocities; an insistence that the guerrillas were only bandits fostered by the world enemy of the time, Imperial Germany; and a highly effective international campaign, especially in Latin America, which went beyond opposition to the occupation to lay a firm foundation of anti-Americanism in the region. The parallels with current US policy in Central America are painful, to say nothing of South-East Asia. But at least the final evacuation of Santo Domingo was not the scuttle of Saigon just over fifty years later.

Calder is refreshingly frank about his philosophy, namely that his analysis is guided by the dependency theory paradigm. But he acknowledges the "technocratic progressive" character of the reformist and development programmes inaugurated by the military government, several of whose officials were anxious "to do good". He also acknowledges the different approach to the various US occupations by American and Latin American scholars, summarised as the former's concentration on US policy studies

and the latter on more ideological concerns. He manages to synthesize the two with meticulous research of both U.S. and Dominican archives. But he tantalizingly fails to develop the details of the division between the State Department and the Pentagon, especially after 1921, over how to handle the problem: again, a topic which echoes through the years to the present.

The outstanding contribution of the book is, however, its historiographical triumph. Calder's description and analysis of the guerrilla war in the eastern provinces, in its various and distinct phases, is remarkable as it has been virtually ignored by historians. At one level, this has been due to the lack of documentation, especially locally, the absence of strong ideological conviction by the various guerrilla groups with most of their followers participating out of sheer hunger and desperation as their lands were swallowed up by the U.S.-owned sugar corporations, and the nature of the leadership: no Sandinos here to create a charismatic image which might have united the struggle, inspired national myths and attracted external support. Yet the war, together with that fought against Sandino in Nicaragua in the late 1920s, was the major military involvement by the United States in Latin America in the twentieth century. It is a timely warning that paradigms dictate priorities and preferences; by refusing to see the guerrillas as bandits, Calder has done a service to the scholarly community, despite his rather terse analysis of the collapse of the struggle with the surrender of most of the leaders in 1922, which seems to beg as many questions as it answers.

Notwithstanding that, his account of the other, complementary, collapse, that of the radical nationalists and their "*evacuación pura y simple*" position in favour of the pragmatists who favoured a compromise, is instructive in giving insights into the nature of Dominican political leadership. The emergence, after withdrawal, of a government dominated by those who eschewed the radical cause and which was essentially that of 1916 was not therefore surprising: little had changed.

So what was the result of the intervention? Public finance was reordered—the nominal *raison d'être* of the occupation—although the Republic was saddled with heavy debts incurred by the impact of the world recession in 1921 and the need for the US military to complete projects particularly aimed at the guerrillas, such as roads. Infrastructure was developed and limited land reform attempted: but generally these helped the sugar industry far more than the majority of impoverished Dominican peasants. Plantation concentration proceeded apace: by 1926, 12 U.S. companies owned 81% of the huge sugar acreage while other crops, grown more by Dominicans—especially food—were neglected. Ironically, the only reform which, if

properly applied, would have addressed the land question, namely the land tax, was denigrated by the nationalists as "an illegitimate offspring of an illegal government" and was the first casualty of the U.S. withdrawal.

But the most important result was one entirely unexpected and unwelcome. The reform of the Guardia Nacional Dominicana and its success as a proxy force against the guerrillas led to its becoming a centralised and efficient force against traditional *caudillismo*. But it fitted well into other Dominican traditions and was ripe for the picking by the unscrupulous. By 1930, Trujillo had it under firm control, enabling him to embark on 31 years of harsh and corrupt dictatorship. In Calder's words, 'the officials of the military establishment merely established an institution based on a U.S. model; they could not impose the values that lay at the core of the model. Traditional Dominican political culture rather than the poorly conceived (and, for six years, poorly executed) hopes of the occupiers shaped the Guardia' (p. 62). An apt epitaph.

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The North American role in the Spanish imperial economy 1760-1819.
JACQUES BARBIER and ALLAN J. KUETHE, (Eds.), Manchester, England,
1984: Manchester University Press. pp. 232. (Cloth)

Recently historians have begun to re-examine the conditions that led to the collapse of the Spanish Empire in America. During the eighteenth century the Spanish crown attempted to restructure the empire, using models imported from its European rivals, in order to reassert its own power and revive the Spanish economy. Free trade decrees, promulgated between 1765 and 1789, intended to open up trade within the empire in order to solve problems of supply and circulation. To an extent the decrees worked, or at least enabled Spain to reap some benefit from the dynamic Atlantic economy of the late eighteenth century, but the fundamental weakness of the Spanish economy and chronic warfare which disrupted trade routes, doomed the reforms to failure. The Crown never could create the closed system it aspired to, least of all in the crowded waters of the Caribbean.

Great Britain would emerge as the ultimate beneficiary of the collapse of the Spanish Empire in the nineteenth century. During the long period

of wars at the end of the eighteenth century, however, traders and others from Britain's newly independent North American colonies played an active role, taking advantage of their status as neutrals during the wars. The essays in this volume, the fruits of a symposium of the same title at the Forty-Fourth International Congress of Americanists in September 1982, examine the activities of North Americans in Spanish America during this brief period. The authors consider the North Americans' revolutionary example, but place greater emphasis on the economic impact of this contact. The volume contains ten brief essays and places special emphasis on the Spanish Caribbean, particularly Cuba, the subject of four papers, and the neighboring zones of Venezuela and Louisiana, with one essay each. The essays cover a broad range of subjects and no effort is made to draw conclusions beyond the remarks in a brief introduction which stress primarily the importance of these previously neglected connections for both Latin and Anglo-American history.

The essays are loosely grouped into four sections beginning with papers by Jacques Barbier and Peggy Liss in a section entitled "Penetration and example", the two main forms of North American influence in the Hispanic colonies during this period. These essays, the most global in their approach, provide some overall structure for the volume. Barbier stresses how enormous wartime fiscal pressures destroyed the political accommodation between Madrid and the Spanish periphery, thus opening the door to outside intrusion in the Empire. In contrast to Barbier's focus on peninsular politics, Liss asks how much did Spanish American Creoles really know about the revolutionary turmoil and rhetoric on their Northern frontier? She revives the notion that the American Revolution served as at least as stirring an example to Creole thinkers as its more socially tumultuous, and therefore potentially threatening, counterpart in France. For Liss, Creole admiration for English, and by extension Anglo-American, ways took off with the British seizure of Havana in 1762. Contacts with North Americans continued to grow until the Jeffersonian trade embargo of 1808, leaving restless Creoles with a mixture of admiration of North American political and economic success but also a fear of North American expansionism. Barbier explains how the door was opened; Liss shows what the open door revealed.

A "Statistical overview" follows that includes two rather technical papers with extensive appendixes by Javier Cuenca and Fernand Ouellet. These papers delineate the significance of trade with the Spanish Indies for the economies of the United States between 1790 and 1819 and the St. Lawrence River Valley between 1760 and 1850, respectively. Cuenca's findings lead him to the fascinating conclusion that trade with the Indies provided an

important component of early economic dynamism for the United States, that "net surpluses with the Indies appear to have covered at least nine-tenths of a sizeable net deficit with the rest of the world in 1790-1811" (p. 46). The Creoles who admired American enterprise unknowingly played a crucial role in assuring its success.

The next four papers deal with different aspects of relations between Anglo-America and Cuba, the Spanish colony which received the greatest amount of Anglo-American attention and served as a gateway between the Anglo and Hispanic worlds. James Lewis focuses on the importance of this trade during the American revolution and on the intricacies of the crucial flour trade. Linda Salvucci stresses the role of "cultural flexibility" and personal connections for Anglo-American merchants seeking to take advantage of chronic grain shortages in Cuba. Jacques Barbier discusses the increased use of bills of exchange as an important sign of the incorporation of Hispanic America into the world economy. The paper reflects Barbier's interest in imperial matters, but fits within this section because Havana became the center of this activity, serving as the funnel for the transfer of funds within the empire and across the Atlantic. Finally Allen Kuethe explains Cuba's privileged position within the empire, exemplified by unusual trade freedom and special tax exemptions, as the price for continued military support from Cuba's emerging sugar elite. Collectively, these four papers demonstrate the increasing importance of Cuba as a magnet for outside attention. This led to greater accommodation between Cuban and Spanish interests and helps to explain Cuba's absence from the Wars of Independence.

The final section examines the Anglo-American presence in two areas on the fringes of the Caribbean. Manuel Lucena Salmoral describes the importance of neutral trade with the United States between 1806 and 1812 in helping to unravel the links of empire in Venezuela. In the last paper Jesus Lorente Miguel outlines the role of the United States in the commercial development of Louisiana.

Many of these papers, the work of an illustrious international group of scholars, spring out of larger ongoing projects. Their origins as oral presentations contributes to the "in-progress" tone of the volume. As a group, the essays represent an important contribution to the study of economic relations in the Atlantic in the Age of Revolution.

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Individual and society in Guiana: a comparative study of Amerindian social organisation. PETER RIVIERE. Cambridge, London, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984. 127 pp. (Cloth, Paper)

Within a mere two years of its publication Dr. Riviere's book has established itself as required reading in most undergraduate courses on Amerindian societies in the Guianas and Venezuela. It has also justified the claim made by the blurb on the book's jacket that it "makes an original contribution to the study of Lowland South American Indian societies that will be invaluable for scholars".

The strength of the book lies in Dr. Riviere's thorough grasp of recent ethnographic publications on the region's indigenous peoples – some of them published solely in languages other than English. Using a thematic approach, he displays a commensurate skill in synthesizing the work of disparate anthropologists and in discerning in the threads of their diverse arguments a coherent pattern that is seen to recur through many of the Amerindian societies of the region. With the added value of a comprehensive Index and Bibliography, *Individual and society in Guiana* has quickly become an invaluable reference source on the area's peoples.

Material for Riviere's theses is drawn from available ethnographic studies of twelve tribes in the region: the Aparai, Trio and Wayana of Brazil, Suriname and French Guiana respectively, the Akawaio, Arecuna, Wapishiana, Macusi, Waiwai and Barama River Caribs of Guyana and the Ye'cuana, Piaroa and Panare of Venezuela. The material is organized in eight concise chapters, the early ones dealing with the commonalities in the social structure of these peoples. In a series of final chapters Riviere explicates his theses relating to the patterns of social organization found in the region.

In developing his arguments, Riviere discusses settlement pattern, size and duration; village composition and the terminology and categories of social classification; autonomy and dependency within settlements and the role of the individual in society. Riviere draws heavily on the work of anthropologists such as Henley, Thomas, Kaplan, Overing, Stephen and Christine Hugh-Jones to support his views.

He stresses the similarities in the basic structures of the area's peoples. He demonstrates the repetition of common features not only in the realms of mythology and cosmology but also in the way these societies order their internal arrangements. He finds patterns in such areas as prescriptive marriage rules, the difference in the relationship between ego and his affines versus the closeness of consanguineal links, the role of the leader and the key position of the shaman.

The central thesis of the book – that the societies under survey continue to function according to autochthonous patterns as far as their social structure and social organisation are concerned – is served by purporting to fit the data into a structural-functionalist framework. Unfortunately many of his patterns, “invariants” and generalisations simply do not hold true for all the peoples treated in his study. The reality for the six tribes located in Guyana, out of the twelve discussed, differs in regard to social structure, social organisation, settlement size, population growth and shift, marriage patterns, female infanticide and other areas. Dr. Riviere’s findings are no doubt applicable to the semi-isolated peoples such as the Trio, subject of his own original fieldwork, but they raise eyebrows in Guyana at least.

One might allow the bad fit of his postulates to pass, if the exceptions were numerically insignificant. Riviere gives no population figures at all, but sound current estimates for the Guyanese tribes involved amount to at least 20,000. I suspect these outnumber the other six tribes under study. One cannot therefore discount what happens in Guyana especially as this country happens to exist in the middle of the geographic area being treated.

The failure of correlation between the groups can be attributed to differences in culture contact experienced in the different territories. In British Guiana the systematic coastlander presence quite purposefully accelerated acculturation, and post-colonial policy has been as integrative or at least normative. More significant throughout the period has been hinterland resource exploitation by non-Amerindian entrepreneurs, which brought the tribes under many influences for cultural change.

The result, for the reader familiar with real conditions among the more acculturated tribes, is an uneasiness with the Riviere analyses which grows with each succeeding section. The book’s postulates have to be seen as applicable only to those tribes still living in semi-isolation in the territories bordering Guyana. To see the differences, it would have been useful for Riviere to have given some consideration to the background history of the region. A relevant guide exists in Butt-Colson’s pioneering essay on “Comparative studies of the social structure of Guiana Indians and the problem of acculturation” (1971).

Of course Dr. Riviere himself points out over and over again the paucity of ethnographic literature on Guyanese Amerindians. With the exception of Butt’s work on the Akawaio in the 1950s, there has been only a sprinkling of anthropologists studying the Guyanese indigenous peoples and these have concentrated on the coastal Arawak, Warrau and Carib and on the “exotic” Waiwai.

The alleged xenophobia of the Guyanese authorities towards foreign

anthropologists only really holds true in the post 1978 period, following an international outcry against the flooding of the traditional homeland of the Akawaio and Arecuna peoples to make way for a large hydro-electric project. The real reason for the sparse anthropological coverage of Guyanese Amerindians may be that they are not unspoiled enough to attract these most romantic of social scientists: they are just too acculturated. Be that as it may, the fact remains that there is very little published research for the reader, or for Riviere himself, to compare with Riviere's. Butt's work, referred to above, is not mentioned in this book, but then her findings appear to contradict Riviere. Did Dr. Riviere not suspect that the missing data might contradict him too?

At the University of Guyana, a handful of researchers are attempting, against many handicaps, to repair some of the gaps in ethnographic data on the Amerindians. Our own surveys of settlement size and pattern point to much denser population concentrations than Riviere grants. In fact most villages have long passed optimum levels. A propos this topic, Riviere talks about the decline in settlement size having gone hand in hand with the drop in total population (p. 26). This appears to hold for those non-Guyanese tribes such as the Tukano Indians for whom detailed studies exist, but in Guyana the indigenous population has dramatically increased in the twentieth century. The pattern of fissioning and regular shifting of village populations which is said to characterise the region held true in the case of the Waiwai up to about the fifties. However, the latest published material on this tribe (relocated south of the Guyana border since 1969) demonstrates that the new pattern of population concentration, with all its attendant ills, still applies to the main body of the Waiwai on the Mapuera River in Brazil (CEDI 1983: 224-249). On the question of the duration of settlements, current trends bear out Butt's contention that villages in Guyana exist in the same location for generations. Today garden places among all the tribes are more often than not two or three hours' walk from home. People put up with the resultant hardships so that their children can go to school and church and so on.

The problems inherent in trying to extrapolate the Riviere material to Guyanese tribes arise most strongly in chapters 6 and 7 where he discusses the role of the individual in society, and autonomy and dependency within settlements. The widespread wage economy, and the equally common remittance economy, obviously upset traditional power networks. Amerindian men and women occupy important posts in their villages, related to administrative and service functions of the national Government, and there are elected local government structures everywhere, even women *touchaus* (village council chairpersons) in several areas. It no longer holds

true, therefore, to claim categorically that "throughout the region it is the affinal relationships that are politically important because they contain the potential for expressing hierarchy" (p. 73).

Despite a notable enthusiasm for education, young people are often unfitted for traditional life by their exposure to the classroom. The most recent Brazilian material on the Waiwai also reinforces the point that the need for extended family relationships has been considerably reduced by access to modern technology and the influence of the mission. Not enough of these phenomena is reflected in Riviere. Perhaps the most useful aspect of Dr. Riviere's book is that it points the way to how much work needs to be done in Guyana. Because of his eminence, and because of the scarcity of work on the area, his is the touchstone which will no doubt spur others to check their findings against his. That surely is justification enough for any scholarly work.

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The Jombee dance of Montserrat: a study of trance ritual in the West Indies. JAY D. DOBBIN. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1986. 202 pp. (Cloth US\$ 22.00)

The author of this study states as his major goal that of preserving in writing a dying religious tradition. He also attempts to explore functions of the religion in Montserratian social structure and to compare the Jombee dance with similar rituals on other Caribbean islands. The book's theoretical focus is derived from the late Victor W. Turner's writings on liminality, George Eaton Simpson's typology of black religions, and Erika Bourguignon's studies of trance and possession states.

Dobbin notes that his research was handicapped from the outset because

he did not have access to the archives of Montserrat and because it is difficult to study a religious tradition when it is on the decline. He also faced what he calls "personality handicaps" which are discussed in Appendix A. Most of the information in Appendix A should have been incorporated into the main text. One factor which is not discussed extensively in the body of the text or the appendix is that Dobbin is a Roman Catholic priest. He discounts the ramifications of this for his research contending that his priesthood had only a positive effect on his ability to gather data. I believe he is correct in his assertion. Montserratians would have had greater trouble understanding why an avowedly non-religious person should have an interest in the Jombee dance than why a religious person (such as a Catholic priest) would have such an interest. Nevertheless, he should have provided greater detail on his interactions with informants.

To the casual observer, Dobbin points out, Montserrat appears so westernized and Christianized that nothing seems to remain of its African past or its African-derived folk religion. For example, the 1960 census listed only 81 of 12,167 as not having a Christian religious affiliation. But for Dobbin, as for many students of Caribbean folk religion, the real problem is that of the relationship between folk traditions and Christianity. He notes three possible relationships: 1) they could blend together in *syncretism*. 2) they could mutually but independently coexist in *parallelism*, or 3) one could superficially overlay the most persuasive and deeper tradition in *stratification*. While the author found evidence for all three types of relationships on Montserrat, he does not allow for a fourth possibility—that of *juxtaposition*. Despite his lack of attention to juxtaposition, he provides ample evidence for juxtaposition in his descriptions of the dance.

Chapter two gives a detailed discussion of one of the over a dozen Jombee dances the author attended between 1975 and 1981. Dances, he points out, are not independent. Each has an elaborate history linking it to previous dances. In this and other chapters, the author seeks to separate description and analysis, and whenever possible, gives his immediate reactions to the proceedings. This mode of presentation sometimes "brings the ritual to life" for the reader. Other times, however, it confuses the reader.

The dance, Dobbin argues, is not a mystery religion. There is no need to decipher and decode. On the other hand, not all meaning is explicit and he finds Victor W. Turner's processual approach most fruitful because it does not attempt to give a universally valid set of meanings for symbols (a goal he erroneously attributes to the structural anthropology of Claude Levi-Strauss), and he also likes Turner's approach because Turner places

greater emphasis on native interpretations. While Dobbin gives a competent exposition of Turner's writings prior to 1978, he does not take Turner's post-1978 writings on ritual performance into account. This is unfortunate because Turner's later writings would be highly applicable.

Dobbin's reading of Turner forces him to ask how the ordinary is transformed into the extraordinary: "How do Montserratian participants take the ordinary items of food and drink, music and dance and, on certain occasions, transform them into a religious ritual, but on other occasions, leave these items as ordinary?" (p. 98). The answer, he suggests, is found in the nature of symbols and in the use of *liminality* in the dance. The Jombee dance, he suggests, is divided into four phases: 1) a break in social relations, 2) a mounting crisis or escalation, 3) a redressive action, and 4) an attempt at reintegration. While Turner presented these as a chronological sequence, Dobbin correctly sees them as non-sequential *elements* within the social drama of the dance.

Chapter five contains a discussion of the Jombee dance as an African-derived religion. The author points out the ambiguity of the Montserratian case as well as the difficulties in applying George Eaton Simpson's categories. In general, the Jombee dance compares to what Simpson would call a neo-African or ancestor cult, but does this point to an African legacy? A previous researcher, John Messenger, had recorded beliefs and rituals of Irish origin on Montserrat that bear striking resemblances to Jombee belief and ritual. This underscores the problem in unequivocally attributing individual traits to a European or African source.

Dobbin also deals with the Jombee dance in relation to other African-derived religions such as Cuminia and Convince on Jamaica, Big Drum on Carriacou, and the Kelle cult on St. Lucia. In doing so, he is forced to rely on published accounts of these religions. This section would have been strengthened by the author's personal attendance at other types of ceremonies on other islands. Comparisons from the literature are always inexact because researchers are dealing with very different time periods; for example, Big Drum in the early 1950s and the Jombee dance in the late 1970s. Also, data are fragmentary. Neither Cuminia nor Kelle have been the subject of full-scale investigations. Moreover, Dobbin does not give adequate attention to variation within and between religious traditions in the Caribbean region and even within the Jombee dance on Montserrat.

The final chapter deals with what the author calls the "death" of the Jombee dance. While acknowledging the dance as an important reservoir of Montserratian culture, it is contended that the dance will die because the forces that created it are gone. He argues that the dance has become a "relic", and claims that modernization (urbanization, mass media, the

shift from agriculture, technology, better transportation, and so on) makes the dance redundant. For example, the entertainment function of the dance is now filled by a variety of agencies, and its medical and therapeutic functions are superseded by the work of a new hospital. What is unclear is why the Jombee dance has become a relic on Montserrat while similar rituals continue to be viable in equally "modern" nation-states such as Trinidad, St. Vincent and Grenada. In some respects, Dobbin's explanation is as vague as that offered by one of his informants: "Lectricity come, dee Jombees die out" (p. 158). I believe that the author greatly underestimates the dance's potential for cultural revitalization. In light of recent research, one might expect a transformation of the Jombee dance, but hardly its demise.

Despite the above criticisms, this is a highly worthwhile study. Dobbin is to be commended for his vivid portrayal of the dance and for his painstaking attention to ethnographic detail. A welcome addition to the growing literature on Caribbean religions.

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Marchin' the Pilgrims home: leadership and decision-making in an Afro-Caribbean faith. STEPHEN D. GLAZIER. Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 1983. xv + 165 pp. (Cloth US\$ 29.95)

In *Marchin' the Pilgrims home*, Stephen D. Glazier presents a detailed ethnography of the Spiritual Baptists (alternately called Shouters, Shakers, or Shango Baptists) of Trinidad. His study begins with the setting of the Spiritual Baptists in Trinidadian history and society and then moves into a well-organized cataloguing of their beliefs, rituals, and institutional structure. Taking his hypothetical cues from Fredrik Barth (1959) and Robert L. Bee (1974), he focuses specifically on the role of the leader – commonly called the "paramount leader" by the Spiritual Baptists – in ritual adaptation and change, in the promotion of candidates for church office, and in economic management. His major theme is that the Spiritual Baptists are what they are today mainly because of the disciplined control and conscious decision-making of the leaders. This emphasis gives his study its uniqueness over against earlier ones.

Glazier conducted his research in the community of Curepe, where there were six Spiritual Baptist churches "at last count." Curepe is eight miles

northeast of Port-of-Spain, and not far from San Juan, Tunapuna, and St. Augustine. He was resident for his fieldwork in the community during the summers of 1976 and 1978. In the summers of 1977 and 1979 he was resident on the St. Augustine campus of the University of the West Indies. He returned briefly to Trinidad in 1982, staying in Port-of-Spain. (Glazier is a North American and, at the date of publication, was Visiting Assistant Professor at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut.) Besides his participant observation of baptisms, mourning ceremonies, pilgrimages, and other rituals, he compiled data on over 240 church members. His documentary evidence included audio recordings of fourteen worship services, photographs of ceremonies and sites, financial records, papers concerning the Spiritual Baptists in the library of the University of the West Indies, and information from the personal diaries of two Baptist leaders.

The most valuable new information in Glazier's study is in his descriptions and narratives of how leadership is acquired, maintained, and wielded. He describes twenty-two ranks or offices in a Spiritual Baptist congregation, with titles such as Shepherd, Watchman, and Judge. He discerns ten hierarchical levels within the twenty-two ranks; several ranks may occupy the same level horizontally. One's rank is determined in the "mourning" ceremony, during which the dreams and visions of the mourner are interpreted by the leader. Glazier contends that previous researchers have overstated the importance of the visions in themselves, underestimating the discretion of the leader in his interpretive role. Indeed, the criteria of the leader in deciding rank are often quite extraneous to the content of the mourner's vision, and the accounts of visions are frequently edited by the leader to suit his decision. One important criterion, it seems, is the avoidance of promoting members who might prove to be overly assertive in campaigning for higher rank or for the paramount leadership itself.

A similar "demythologizing" of spiritual aspects runs through Glazier's discussion of the other functions of the leader. Power, prestige in the community, wealth, property ownership – these are more important as determinants of paramouncy than charisma or the quality of the spiritual experiences one has had in rising through the ranks.

While Glazier's book is impressive as a positivistic description of "the stuff of daily life", as he puts it, of Spiritual Baptist practice and organization, it is problematic as an interpretation of that "stuff". He is at pains throughout to disassociate his data on the Spiritual Baptist experience from the hypotheses of Herskovits, Simpson, and Bastide. On only one Spiritual Baptist phenomenon does he seek corroboration from among those seminal scholars, when he adopts Bastide's principle of juxtaposition from *The African religions of Brazil* (1978) to explain how

Christian, African, Islamic, and Hindu elements can be present in Spiritual Baptist ritual without resulting in syncretism. Otherwise, he jettisons the ideas of African retentions, continuities, and reinterpretations with regard to the Spiritual Baptist faith and distances that faith from other more overtly African practices in Trinidad, such as Shango. He also tends to take at face value certain comments of Spiritual Baptists themselves that downplay African elements, without acknowledging that psycho-social interpretations of those statements might be warranted.

Glazier is certainly correct in implying that contemporary studies of Afro-American religions cannot be undertaken with unrevised earlier theories. Yet his neglect of some recent theoretical studies impoverishes his interpretation of his material. Most notably missing from his references and bibliography is the important Mintz and Price paper entitled *An anthropological approach to the Afro-American past* (Philadelphia, 1976), a document which contains the criticism, refinement, and enrichment of Herskovits' hypotheses which would have served Glazier's study better than his abandonment of them. A key idea in *An anthropological approach* is that of "cognitive orientations," basic assumptions about social relations and the way the world works phenomenologically that can be distinctly African, assumptions which may be more important than overt and explicit cultural continuities. Within the religious matrix, they are more resistant to acculturation than more observable cultural retentions. With the theoretical vision provided by Mintz and Price, much of what remains matter-of-factly presented data on ritual, symbol, social relations, and wordly attitudes in Glazier's book can be seen as pointing to a more African aspect of the Spiritual Baptists than he is willing to admit.

There are other assertions in Glazier's book which are not supported with sufficient data or analysis. He tends too easily to generalize about Spiritual Baptists as a whole in Trinidad on the basis of his findings in a particular district. Moreover, his claim that the Spiritual Baptists are a comfortably accepted and respectable institution in what he sees as the advanced, industrialized society of modern Trinidad may or may not be accurate, but there is not enough analysis of modern Trinidadian history and society for his claim to be accepted as more than a matter of opinion.

In summary, Glazier's book is strong as a description of the details of Spiritual Baptist ritual, organization, and leadership but unsatisfying in its interpretation of those details.

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Cultural adaptation and resistance on St. John: three centuries of Afro-Caribbean life. KAREN FOG OLWIG. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1985. xii + 226 pp. (Paper US\$ 15.00)

Olwig's well conceptualized and clearly written study of social life on St. John is convincing evidence that there is still room for more good anthropological research and analysis in the Caribbean. She is to be congratulated for a job well done. Combining ethnohistory, history and participant observation, she brings together data and analysis spanning three centuries, beginning with the establishment of slave plantations on the island and ending in the present. In spite of major transformations in the economic foundation of St. Johnian life, starting with plantations and slavery in the eighteenth century, passing through a peasant period when the estates collapsed in the nineteenth century, and ending after the island became a part of the expanding American tourist industry after World War II, and the transfer of the island from Denmark to the United States, she demonstrates conclusively that the exchanges of goods and services made possible the adaptation and survival of the St. Johnian population. Furthermore, she argues convincingly, these exchanges constitute the continuing basis of the island's social structure.

These conclusions should come as no surprise to anthropologists, especially those familiar with the literature in economic anthropology where exchange has long been seen as basic both to the adaptation and survival of human populations and to the maintenance of social relationships. But somehow in the long history of research and debate over West Indian social structure it appears they have been overlooked. The exchanges of goods and services have not been examined as they relate to domestic life, family organization and other aspects of social structure. We are

indebted, therefore, to Olwig for making this point for us and for directing our attention to this long neglected matter.

But the past neglect may be more instructive than Olwig's effort to point it out to us. Her study was done on St. John, the most marginal island in one of the more marginal island groups in the region. That exchanges were developed by the slaves and their descendants there, and became the basis of their adaptation and survival, is of interest; but events and circumstances on St. John, as the book makes clear, differed significantly from those on Jamaica and Barbados, not to speak of Haiti, Cuba and Puerto Rico. It may well be that the unique and atypical circumstances of St. John made possible there what was not possible as a general pattern on the other more successful, from the perspective of the dominant Europeans, prosperous and populous islands. That is, the so called problem of West Indian social structure, to put it another way, may be that the slaves and their descendants on the more typical plantation-dominated, sugar-producing islands and mainland territories were unable to develop patterned social relationships of any intensity precisely because they were unable, due to the constraints imposed on them, to make the exchanges that in most human societies reinforce and maintain culturally determined patterns of social relations. It is not that her predecessors neglected to look at exchanges; rather it is that they did not find them developed as Olwig found them in the deviant case of St. John. From her study, therefore, we learn much about St. John, but little about the major forms of the West Indian social system most of the authors she cites are trying to understand; her effort to project the results of her research into the debate on West Indian social structure consequently will, I am afraid, add not clarity but confusion.

In addition, although its major conclusion is that exchange is the basis of St. Johnian adaptation and social life, Olwig does not provide sufficient descriptive and analytic detail to make possible comparison between the exchange system on St. John and other well described exchange systems in Latin America, Southeast Asia, and elsewhere in the world.

Olwig has done a good job of applying a useful approach to the study of a part of the Caribbean. She has combined an adaptive ecological perspective with the use of history and ethnohistory to show us the development of an island social system. The problem is that she has selected a deviant case. What we need now is for someone to take the perspective she has presented and apply it to the mainstream of West Indian life.

Then and only then will our understanding of West Indian society be advanced and will we be able to see deviant cases like St. John in perspective.

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Five fingers for survival. WILLIAM WASHABAUGH. Ann Arbor: Karoma Publishers, Inc., 1986. xiv + 198 pp. (Paper US\$ 16.95)

This book is about the sign language used by the deaf of Providence Island. The author shows that this sign language is undeveloped as a linguistic system. He argues that it is the special social circumstances of the deaf in Providence Island society that prevent the development of a fully systematic sign language. The book makes an important contribution to the current debate about whether systematic features supposedly shared by all languages are the product of an innate, autonomous "language faculty" (as maintained by such linguists as Chomsky) or whether they are the outcome of communicative functions and are derived from social interaction (as maintained by linguists such as Givon, Foley and others)

Providence Island lies off the coast of Nicaragua. At one time under British influence, it is now governed by Columbia. It was the locus of studies of English creole by the author who noticed, during his fieldwork, the high number of deaf persons in the population. Unlike the deaf in a country such as the United States, the deaf of Providence Island do not have separate educational facilities and they do not form a separate Deaf community. They live with their families, much as everyone else. Washabaugh shows that deafness on Providence Island is genetically controlled and has been present for at least three generations. He proposes that in Providence Island we have the opportunity to observe a sign language that has been created without any outside linguistic model and without any pressures from educators or others to make the deaf conform to any particular mode of communication. If the sign language in use has a systematic structure like other languages, this would provide support for the argument that linguistic structures develop independently of social circumstances.

Washabaugh's analysis of Providence Island Sign Language shows that it has no linguistic structure. He shows that signers differ considerably in the signs they give for various meanings, not only among themselves, but from one occasion to the next. Furthermore, so far as Washabaugh

was able to determine, the sign language has no syntax. There are no sign order conventions or other devices within the language itself by which grammatical relationships between signs within an utterance are indicated. When it is used out of context, there is much ambiguity of meaning. Thus when signers were asked to tell others the story of a puppet drama they had witnessed, their recipients did not interpret this retelling with any consistency. In addition, Washabaugh found no evidence that signers ever offered to correct one another's signing. Evidently there is no "proper way" to construct signed utterances: any gestural construction will serve, if it gets desired results. To Washabaugh, this suggests that Providence Island Sign Language is undeveloped as a language. It functions well as a communication system because of its highly contextualized nature but it does not have the features we would expect of it if it were to be considered a full-fledged language. In this it is markedly different from such a sign language as American Sign Language, which is used by the deaf throughout the United States and Canada. This has been shown to have all the marks of a well developed language, notwithstanding the many special features it has because it is gestural and not spoken.

The unsystematic character of Providence Island Sign Language is taken by Washabaugh as support for the view that a communicative system with well developed linguistic features is not an inevitable development among humans, as many maintain. He argues that his data support the view that the features that a communicative system develops are just those that it needs to have, given the communicative functions for which it is adapted. Language, therefore, is the product of social relationships, its systematic features the result of its uses in interaction. In this view, the structure of grammar does not reveal the structure of the human mind, as Chomsky would have it. Rather, it is an emergent consequence of the repeated patterning of communicative action in interaction. In a long chapter Washabaugh explores the nature of the social relationships of the Providence Island deaf. He shows how they are taken care of by the hearing, their every need anticipated, much as adults take care of young children. Providence Island deaf have a dependency relationship with the hearing. They are not excluded or regarded as sub-normal but they are treated as persons who need special attention. Furthermore, the deaf make little effort on their own behalf to form a community separate from the hearing. They are oriented wholly towards full membership in the general society of the island. They cannot achieve full membership in this society, however, for the hearing, though they communicate with the deaf in sign, do so only for immediate practical purposes. They do not bring the deaf in as full participants in their own conversations and there is thus no possibility of the deaf truly sharing in the world of the hearing.

Washabaugh argues that it is this highly asymmetric nature of the social relationships between deaf and hearing that impedes the development of a fully-fledged sign language. The deaf of Providence Island are not expected to be able to communicate for themselves and are almost never in circumstances where there are only other deaf to rely upon. They thus have no incentive to develop a communication system of their own. In consequence no system of communication emerges that can function autonomously in all circumstances, independently of specific individuals with intimate knowledge of the immediate context. The system of communication that has developed, thus, has no grammar because it does not need to have one.

The book is clearly written and is accessible to the non-specialist. Washabaugh is successful in conveying a vivid picture of the daily life of the deaf. There are many detailed descriptions of their interactions and a number of conversations are presented in full with accompanying analyses. The book is well illustrated with photographs and drawings, it has a complete set of references and an index. There are many minor misprints throughout.

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Alors ma chère moi... Propos d'un musicien guadeloupéen recueillis et traduits par Marie-Céline Lafontaine. CARNOT (F. MOLEON). Paris: Editions Caribéennes, 1986. 159 pp. (Paper)

Reading *Alors ma chère, moi...*, is like following a conversation between two friends: one obviously eager to learn, shooting questions to the other who, although pleased to answer, intends to do so at his own pace and in his own way. Through Carnot's memories and M.C. Lafontaine's relevant, if sometimes lengthy notes, the reader goes back to a period of big plantations and cabins, a colonial atmosphere curiously maintained more than fifty years after the 1848 Abolition of slavery.

Throughout his numerous jobs, as a farm worker, in the sugarcane fields, as a capricious fisherman, music dominated Carnot's life. Even his relationship with his mother and with other women are centered around his early passion for the drum. He recalls with a catching laughing tone the whipping that he got from his mother for having spent the night in a cafe (p. 32), and his subsequent running away in the woods for two

or three nights. A woman who did not even know how to play the drums herself introduced him to the world of music, showing with the tips of her fingers how to play the different rhythms: *graj*, *léwòz*, etc. (p. 51).

Carnot's extensive knowledge of Guadeloupean music is well reinforced throughout the book with M.C. Lafontaine's clear and precise specifications. The readers enter a lively atmosphere of "fête de commune" or county fair with their decorated stands and big tents under which the music of the "léwòz" leads the dance (p. 48-p. 152). Indeed, Carnot delves into the cultural applications of the different rhythms such as the "veillée funèbre" or funeral vigil where specific musical requests can be made (53), or the "vénére" (49), and of course the "léwòz" of which Carnot speaks with an amorous knowledge (61). He makes the difference between the "léwòz en couillonade" in its diluted version, as it is practiced today, and the real "léwòz" which has to follow specific rules and in which other rhythms cannot be included.

Additionally, Lafontaine's notes provide some valuable information on the various drums: the material used for their making, how they can be used (horizontally for the drum "boula", for example) and even the different variations of a specific type of drum like the "gwoka" (p. 153 n. 129; p. 157 n. 150). Likewise, she goes into the requirements for performing the quadrille (p. 148 n. 55), and the occasions in which it is played.

Anyone more or less familiar with the conditions of the artists in the developing countries will not be surprised by Carnot's precarious financial state. In Haiti, exceptionally talented artists, such as the drummer Ti Roro, the singer Lumane Casimir, have died in a state of financial distress. Likewise, instead of getting any reward for his talent, Carnot was taken advantage of, and earned a meager sum of "80,000 francs" for his musical tour in France and nothing at all for his tour in Puerto Rico and elsewhere (p. 79). One of Carnot's greatest regrets is not to own his "case" or house, although he sees his life as basically fulfilling and happy. To Lafontaine's question "Do you have any complaints about your life?", he answered "No, no... I have not committed any crime" (p. 83; my translation).

One cannot speak of *Alors ma chère, moi...* without mentioning the language of the book. Having read both the French and Creole versions, I can appreciate Lafontaine's French translation which conveys to the non-Creole reader the charm and wit of Carnot's language. The exclamations, the pauses of silence, the numerous digressions by which the tale comes back eventually and charmingly to the starting point, all are recaptured and such is the evocating power of the dialogues that one can almost imagine actually listening to the words and the drums.

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Caribbean style. SUZANNE SLESIN, STAFFORD CLIFF, JACK BERTHELOT, MARTINE GAUMÉ, & DANIEL ROZENSZTROCH. Photographs by GILLES DE CHABANEIX. New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1985. 290 pp. (Cloth US\$ 35.00)

Caribbean style is, above all, a very pretty book. From its colorful dust jacket photo, on to its shocking pink and jade checkerboard end papers, to its stylized cut-out graphics, and to the over six hundred pristine color photos that constitute its *raison d'être*, it presents a feast for the eyes that rivals the glossiest of illustrated cookbooks. The Foreword, written by Jan Morris, transforms into prose the aesthetic preciousness of the book's photographic vision, for example describing the Caribbean climate as "an abstraction of immense sensual power" and the region's storms as "exactly like the sudden volatile passions of a hot human temper, [followed by] the warm calm [that makes] the wet foliage steam, almost *purr* with luxurious relief" (unpaginated, emphasis hers). The introduction by the late Guadeloupean architect Jack Berthelot and his associate Martine Gaumé, though somewhat less unbridled in its romanticism, strikes a similar tone, speaking for example of "the sensuality of exotic veined woods, richly scented and warm in tone [as] part of the seductiveness of a decor that hides and reveals at the same time." Because, the essay continues, the people of each island live "in exile from all the other islands . . . this book is certain to be a surprise for West Indians themselves" (p. 3).

Leaving aside the question of whether Caribbean peoples are really so isolated from one another, it is hard to disagree with the assertion that many Caribbean folk would be surprised at what they would find in this volume, for the selectivity of its images reduces to a picturesque aside the kinds of scenes that most inhabitants of the region live in on a daily basis. What dominates the stage instead are the homes of the privileged — magisterial, lavishly landscaped, exquisitely furnished, and impeccably dusted. The Martiniquans to whom I've shown this book have been as impressed by its images of Martinique as those of other islands; their "surprise" is based on the distance produced by wealth and class, not by geographical insularity. A few captions may convey something of the book's perspective:

[Under the photo of mouth-watering tropical fruits that opens the first chapter:] "The Caribbean offers a series of memorable, colorful, and ever-changing scenes in which the striking images of the idealized landscape are juxtaposed with the vibrancy of everyday life."

[In a page spread on Weatherhills Estate in Antigua, under a smiling black woman in a white cap:] "The housekeeper stands in a doorway near the kitchen."

[Accompanying a full-page portrait of a parrot next to a delicate pink blossom:] "One of the three red parrots that belong to the house perches on a chair."

[In a section devoted to a house in Jacmel, Haiti:] "One of the maids poses near a group of family portraits."

[For a photo of Jack Berthelot's own house in Guadeloupe:] "The dining room, furnished with classical modern chairs by Mies van der Rohe, is open to the verandah."

And so on.

In this context, it was a welcome relief (in a chapter somewhat maladroitly entitled "The Popular House") to come upon brief sections illustrating the "handcrafted house" and the "school house" — with photos that included the plastic flowers, oilcloth table coverings, multicolored doorway streamers, and collages of old photos, calendars, and newspapers that in my experience hover more toward the center of an identifiable "Caribbean style."

Had this book been given a more apt title, such as "Better Homes and Gardens of the Caribbean," one would perhaps be less justified in faulting the narrowness of its vision. But Berthelot and Gaumé's earlier study, *Kaz Antiyé: jan moun ka rété / Caribbean popular dwelling / L'Habitat populaire aux Antilles* (1982), with its modern map, its correct spelling of Marie Galante, its careful analysis of architectural forms, and its attention to historical background, forms an ultimately unflattering basis of comparison.¹ And one possible reaction to this glossier sequel is an uncomfortable suspicion that the authors of a legitimate, well researched foray into the life of a region have succumbed to the temptations of the market place, lending their names and personal expertise to an undertaking that leaves Caribbean folk standing out of the camera's range, off back in the servants' quarters.

NOTE

1. For a thoughtful discussion of *Kaz Antiyé*, see Jay Edwards' 1983 review in this journal (57: 173-200).

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In het land van de overheerser. Deel II. Antillianen en Surinamers in Nederland, 1634/1667-1954. GERT OOSTINDIE and EMY MADURO. Dordrecht (Holland) and Providence RI (U.S.A.): Foris Publications, 1986. xi + 255 pp. (Cloth Dfl. 34,50)

The close historical ties between the Netherlands and her former colonies in Suriname and the Antilles had been little noted even in the Netherlands until the recent mass migration of populations from those areas to the Netherlands. Always of secondary importance compared to the East Indian possessions, the West Indian, with their combined population in the late eighteenth century of around 75,000, mainly slaves, tended to be forgotten after the decline of the plantation economy at that time. Likewise, in the general knowledge about Suriname and the Antilles, there has been a tendency to think of them as adjacent and alike, while in fact they are separated by a thousand miles and by correspondingly vast differences in historical experience. This handsome volume by Gert Oostindie and Emy Maduro, richly illustrated and replete with document facsimiles, is a compelling reminder of the intimate relationship that has existed between the Netherlands and these regions and at the same time provides perceptive insight into the distinctions between them.

This is the second of a two-volume work, *In het land van de overheersers* (In the land of the rulers), celebrated as the one-hundredth book published by the Royal Institute of Anthropology and Linguistics in Leiden. The two volumes chronicle emigration from her main colonies to the Netherlands, the reception there of the newcomers, and their response. The first, by Harry A. Poeze, outlines the history of Indonesians in the Netherlands 1600-1950. In the first part of the present volume Oostindie does the same for Surinamers in "Kondreman in Bakrakondre", followed by Maduro tracing the Antilleans in "Nos a Bai Ulanda". Their deliberate use of the Sranan and Papiamentu titles is reflective of a special effort to respect the perspectives of the respective peoples involved in this story. The two segments are written to be read independently, although they treat some of the same themes and draw upon some of the same primary and secondary literature and archival resources. The chronological scope of the study extends from the establishment of Dutch rule in the respective colonies up to the Charter of the Kingdom of 1954, when Suriname and the Netherlands Antilles achieved full internal autonomy. While it is difficult to resist wishing they had continued their study up to the present, to include the immigration of some 300,000 Surinamers and Antilleans to the Netherlands during the last two decades, the authors are correct in pointing out that a spate of other recent authors have addressed this period, including

Budike (1982), Bovenkerk (1975), and Van Amersfoort (1974). Moreover, many more studies are in progress in response to pressing societal issues raised by the new makeup of the population, which also features recent infusion from other parts of the world. The major contribution of the present volume is its presentation of an historical background for students of the current developments. Joined to other, more general recent historical studies, this work will also allow some comparison of the Dutch experience at home with colored populations, with that of other European states. See, for example, Saunders (1982), Cohen (1980), Debrunner (1979), and Walvin (1973).

I liken this book primarily to studies of blacks in European societies because it shows that although the Dutch colonial populations became quite diverse, it was primarily those of mixed European and African descent who traveled to the Netherlands during the period in question. More came from Suriname, which had the largest slave population, than from the Antilles because in many ways the islands were more oriented toward the Caribbean, South America, and North America than toward the Netherlands. Oostindie estimates that the Surinamers numbered about 3,000 by the mid-twentieth century. Meanwhile, descendants of the contract labor population recruited for Suriname from the Dutch and British East Indies in the nineteenth century did not begin coming to the Netherlands until after 1954. The fate of the European Surinamer population which moved back to the Netherlands is one topic raised which merits further development. There is some discussion of the Jewish element, which in Suriname, for example, comprised more than half the European population in the eighteenth century. Oostindie, citing Van Lier (1977), points out that it was only in the twentieth century, after the reception for Jews improved in Europe, that the Jewish elite from the colony preferred to live in the Netherlands. This contrasted with the colored elite, which had much earlier found better treatment in Europe than in Suriname. The Jewish and colored elites had been elevated in status since the white European elite largely abandoned Suriname following the economic collapse in the eighteenth century. On the other hand, Maduro notes that it was only in the twentieth century that the non-white elite of Curacao was attracted to the Netherlands, due to the variant characteristics of the Antillean economic and social structure.

The authors devote most of their attention to elites, both because they afford the most documentation and because the major motivations for the travel from both colonies during the eighteenth and nineteenth century were education and business. For the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the discussion centers on the several hundred slaves and servants who

accompanied their masters to the Netherlands. In this connection, both authors provide instructive documentation on the evolution of the legal status of slaves and slavery in the Netherlands. They also discuss at length the image of blacks in Dutch art and literature. Oostindie's approach is mainly thematic, with other sections treating the role of education, expositions, and missionary work in bringing Surinamers to the Netherlands. He then concludes with a discussion of the organization in the twentieth century of social and political societies and the development of nationalism. In scanning the centuries he uses the careers of selected prominent figures such as J.E. Capitein, Anton de Kom, Otto Huiswood, and Lou Lichtveld to illustrate significant trends. Maduro's study is somewhat briefer and more chronological in structure and focuses mainly on Curacao because immigration to the Netherlands from the other islands was insignificant until well into the twentieth century. Also, her essay is based more on interviews than Oostindie's, due to scarcity of sources. Paralleling Oostindie's discussion of student emigration and the development of organizations and national consciousness, she notes a later development in every category among Antilleans as well as a smaller scale. Maduro too highlights individuals who represent certain aspects of the experience, for example, the writer-politicians Colá Debrot and Boelie van Leeuwen.

Both authors found the treatment of the immigrants in the Netherlands to be dependent primarily upon their economic and social status. While there were individual cases of racial prejudice, this never became a generalized phenomenon during the period in question. Moreover, religion was more likely to be a bar to acceptance than color. For their part, Surinamers and Antilleans, to varying degrees, showed a strong attraction toward the Netherlands and became loyal subjects there when able to settle. With regard to the development of nationalism, it is noteworthy that there was very little contact between Surinamers and Antilleans in the Netherlands. Furthermore, Maduro observes that among the smaller Antillean islands there tended to be more sentiment against Curacao than against the Netherlands. An important hindrance to formation of a national identity among the Antilleans was the absence of a generally accepted common language. As for Suriname, despite the wider acceptance of Sranan, its diverse cultural groups showed a similar lack of collective identity in the Netherlands as well as at home. This study makes a valuable contribution toward a better understanding of the historical patterns shaping the current situation, uncovers a host of important topics needing further research, and identifies rich sources that may be explored for that purpose.

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Overzee: Nederlandse koloniale geschiedenis, 1590-1975. E. VAN DE BOOGAART, P.J. DROOGLEVER, *et al.* Haarlem: Fibula-van Dishoeck, 1982. 291 pp. (Paper)

The history of Dutch expansion overseas has once more come to the fore in the Netherlands. Most scholars have concentrated their studies on specific aspects of Dutch involvement in Asia, Africa, the Americas or the slave trade. As a matter of fact, the only general history of Dutch colonialism by a single author is H.T. Colenbrander's *Koloniale geschiedenis*, which appeared in the 1920s. Only in 1985 M. Kuitenbrouwer published *Nederland en de opkomst van het moderne imperialisme*, which treats Dutch colonial policy from 1870 to 1902. A modern study which discusses Dutch overseas expansion from the sixteenth through the twentieth century is, however, sadly lacking.

The volume of essays reviewed here is not intended to fill this gap (p. 7). All papers have been published previously in the *Algemene geschiedenis*

der Nederlanden (AGN). The eight authors were free to choose their own topics and pose questions they themselves thought relevant. As a result the collection lacks theoretical structure. The essays are very uneven, not only in quantity – the longest one counts 47 pages, the shortest 6 pages – but in quality as well. Another acknowledged problem is that the essays were pulled from the AGN and thus highlight the actions of the Dutch, while reactions of native populations or competing Europeans receive less attention. Moreover, the periodization is determined by political and administrative changes in the Netherlands.

The collection in fact is divided in two parts: Dutch colonialism before and after 1800, when profound changes took place in the Dutch empire. The pre-1800 period is discussed in five articles which treat Dutch exploits in Asia, South Africa, the Atlantic, and the connection between West-Africa and the Americas based on gold, slaves and the plantation system.

The two contributions by F.S. Gaastra on the *Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (VOC) in Asia illustrate the problem of periodization described above. Both articles discuss the same topics, but Dutch political history dictated that 1680 would be a demarcation line. The first essay begins with the successful expedition to the Cape of Good Hope in 1595. The second paper closes in 1795 (French occupation of the Netherlands), although the author would have preferred to finish his treatise in 1811 when the English brought the VOC-era to a definitive close. The three subjects treated in these articles are the financial and administrative structure of the VOC; the VOC in Asia which discusses trade wars and organization; and finally developments in both the trade between the Dutch Republic and Asia and inter-Asian commerce.

Before 1800, Dutch colonial exploitation was based on trading posts or plantations, except for South Africa where white farmers settled. Robert Ross discusses the VOC in South Africa and stresses that the company did not intend its presence there to be profitable, but rather used the Cape territory as an intermediate port between Europe and the East.

E. van den Boogaart describes Dutch expansion in the Atlantic between 1590-1674, which sounded the deathbell for the Iberian monopoly on African trade and brought the first Western European intruders to the coasts of the Americas. The instrument of Dutch trade and conquest was the *Westindische Compagnie* (WIC). Traditional historiography explains the "failure of the WIC" to short-sightedness of the *Heren XIX* or the squabbles between the provinces of Zeeland and Holland. Van den Boogaart thinks that despite the existing mercantile enthusiasm the difference between imperial dreams and reality was enormous and that Dutch settlement in Brazil and North America was, in fact, not feasible in the long term. In

1674, the second WIC was founded and since that time the company steadily lost influence, mainly to private companies. P.C. Emmer describes this period of WIC decline, the vicissitudes of plantations on the Wild Coast and the concomitant development of the Dutch slave trade.

The second part of this volume deals with the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The East Indies and West Indies are discussed separately in four articles; the Great War is used as an inappropriate dividing line.

C. Fasseur wrote the two articles on the East and the West before 1914. In the 28 pages on the East Indies, which includes much new archival material, he examines Dutch expansion; the *cultuur-stelsel* (cultivation system); and the so-called ethical policy. In only 7 pages he manages to relate the history of Suriname and the Netherlands Antilles from 1795 to 1914. The importance of Fasseur's contribution is that he attempts, however cautiously, to compare some developments in Suriname and Java.

The late S.L. van der Wal described the turbulent relationship between the Netherlands and the East Indies between the two world wars. The fundamental changes in Dutch colonial policy after 1900 are highlighted, while the Indonesian nationalist movement is treated in a fleeting manner; again, a consequence of the accent on Dutch history. C.Ch. Goslinga hurriedly treats constitutional, political and economic changes in and religious differences between the Netherlands Antilles and Suriname during the *inter-bellum* years.

As to be expected, the last essay by P.J. Drooglever analyzes decolonization, a process which still has not come to a close in the case of the Netherlands. Not surprisingly, the author is especially concerned with the complications in the East. This "mental decolonization" also had its repercussions in the West and eventually led to the independence of Suriname and the *status aparte* of Aruba.

The geographical boundaries, the sometimes unfortunate periodizations, and, above all, the division of labor between so many different scholars make it impossible to arrive at a coherent analysis of Dutch colonialism. Moreover, the articles almost exclusively represent the Dutch point of view. Nevertheless, the collection serves as a useful survey, in particular for the essays on the VOC and the East Indies. This survey function is strengthened by the bibliographical references, split in sections on used sources and literature, a bibliography compiled by each author, plus an overview of existing bibliographies, archival guides and encyclopaedias. This nicely illustrated paperback will have some use as long as a general history of Dutch expansion overseas remains to be written.

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Rural development in the Caribbean. P.I. GOMES (ed.). London: C. Hurst and Company. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985. xxi + 246 pp. (Cloth US\$ 32.50, Paper US\$ 14.95)

This collection of eleven papers, mostly about the English-speaking Caribbean, begins with three papers whose emphasis is historical. The volume begins felicitously with Marshall's "Peasant development in the West Indies since 1838". Marshall reviews the history of peasant holdings and production, and emphasizes the contribution Caribbean peasants have made in expanding the production possibilities of the region beyond the monocultural patterns of the plantations.

Sleeman analyzes the evolution of two class formations, in Barbados and Martinique, which retained control of sugar cane production and processing in local, rather than metropolitan, hands. The key factor in both economies was the ability of sugar producers to obtain credit locally.

Acosta and Casimir review the history of the "counter-plantation system" in St. Lucia, including peasant resistance to the control of production by the plantations, the development of *métayage* and peasant-defined tenure systems, and the effects of the transformation from sugar to bananas as the principal agricultural export.

Several of the papers are intended as studies of local factors in rural development. Gomes presents data on demographics, employment and socio-political relations in a village in Dominica in which workers had resisted the decline of the plantation which hired them and occupied much of its land. Gomes's research was intended as the basis of planning for development of the area after the government took control of the plantation. In the context of a study of value orientations, Pemberton presents a historical overview of agriculture in Tobago and results of a survey of peasants. Clearly, economic factors were the strongest disincentive for entry

into farming, and the mean age of Pemberton's sample was fifty-nine.

Craig's paper on Village Councils in Trinidad and Tobago shows how the councils became channels for People's National Movement political patronage through *ad hoc* programs rather than vehicles for rural development. The "community resistance" included in the paper's title was apparently largely passive, without producing alternative means to popular participation in development.

Fieldwork for the Gomes, Pemberton and Craig papers was conducted in the early to mid-1970s. Given the rapid developments of the past decade, it is unfortunate that only brief updating was possible. Gomes writes in a footnote (p. 75) that after his report was submitted, six years elapsed before the government began to plan for development of the village. The villagers' violent protests were made ineffectual by their lack of a link to national political structures. Craig says (pp. 190-1) that nothing had happened in the decade since the end of fieldwork that would change the thesis of the paper. Nevertheless, these and other papers leave the reader anxious to know more about developments in the intervening period, such as attempts by the unemployed to seize control of public works projects mentioned in Craig's paper (p. 184).

Durant-Gonzalez presents an ethnography of higglering in Jamaica, discussing the skills required and recruitment into the occupation. Higglaring is described as providing skills and achievements for women without fostering their social and economic growth. In the context of the other papers, a discussion of the effects of the decline of peasant holdings and the expansion of the marketing of processed imported foods on Caribbean internal market systems would have been helpful.

The remainder of the papers in the volume are concerned with strategies for rural development. Pollitt's reprinted paper, "Towards the socialist transformation of Cuban agriculture, 1959-82", discusses changes in landholding and the structure of the agricultural labor force from pre-Revolutionary conditions. The paper reviews not only the state sector, but transitions in the 20% of farm land remaining in the private sector. The current strategy was the formation of cooperatives in which an average of twenty-five households pooled their resources, with reimbursement according to individual contributions. In the context of this volume, it would be useful to know more about the internal functioning of these cooperatives, the nature of support from the state sector and their potential for adaptation to capitalist, "counter-plantation" agrarian systems in the region.

This reader's hopes had been raised by the title of Henderson and Patterson's paper, "Agricultural extension for rural transformation: the

C.A.E.P. model". It was disappointing to learn that their program had only just begun. While the paper begins with a clear analysis of Caribbean extension problems, it is largely a programmatic statement. For readers whose eyes glaze at the appearance of a flow chart, those in this paper are both refreshing and realistic.

Thompson's paper, "Towards agricultural self-reliance in Grenada: an alternative model", and McIntosh and Manchew's "Nutritional needs, food availability and the realism of self-sufficiency" make the most interesting pair in terms of strategies for rural development. After cogent discussions of the alternative development models of Amin and Thomas and of class forces in Grenada, Thompson analyzes the relationship of class to food consumption and proposes goals for replacing imported foods with locally produced ones. His production goals follow the structure of food consumption in La Poterie, a poor and necessarily self-reliant village, though the level of consumption is increased to acceptable standards. Thompson does not underestimate the problems of restructuring consumer patterns or regenerating agricultural production and concludes on a discouraging note.

McIntosh and Manchew review problems of food import substitution on a regional basis. They review nutritional problems in the region, show the levels of self-sufficiency per food type for five Caribbean countries, propose a model for identifying nutritional goals based on local production, and estimate achievable levels of self-sufficiency for the year 2000, with a general increase in per capita food production of 1-1.25%. Even in this projection, self-sufficiency in legumes and vegetables remains low, at about 21% and 33% respectively. The authors conclude by predicting that without intensive production efforts, the chances for self-sufficiency by the end of the century are slim.

Each of the papers in the volume contributes to a greater understanding of the constraints to rural development in the English-speaking Caribbean. Among the strengths of the collection is its wide coverage, with data from nine Caribbean economies. Most of the papers achieve the editor's goal of paying attention to both underlying structural factors and location-specific elements.

The collection of papers as a whole leaves the reader discouraged about the prospects for rural development in the region. This may be a healthy discouragement, but one is left wondering whether there are indeed no examples of political action whereby rural people have not only resisted economic oppression but created alternative means of becoming, as Craig says, "not victims but in the final analysis protagonists of their own fate" (p. 191). Given the resilience of Caribbean peasants described in several

of the papers, especially those by Marshall and Acosta and Casimir, it would be surprising if the picture were so wholly negative.

The book begins and ends with an introduction and postscript by the editor. The introduction is concerned with defining rural development and stresses the importance of underlying structural factors. The postscript derives some policy implications from the papers. A somewhat closer tying together of the themes in the papers at the conclusion of the book would have been helpful.

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Capitalism, socialism and technology: a comparative study of Cuba and Jamaica. CHARLES EDQUIST. London: Zed Books Ltd., 1985. xiii + 182 pp. (Paper US\$ 9.95)

In the Preface of this book the author states "...that the present study is one of the first attempts to investigate in detail the differences between a capitalistic and a socialist country [Cuba and Jamaica] in relation to causes and consequences of technical change in a specific economic sector" (p. xi). On page 3 he remarks that "By examining and comparing the choice of technique to do the same tasks (cane cutting and loading in two countries with different socio-economic systems) I am attempting to contribute to our knowledge about the driving forces behind, and the effects of, technical change." And "...to analyze the determinants and consequences of these processes, which means that neither the techniques nor the socio-economic and political conditions as such, but the relationship between the two, are placed at the centre of focus" (p. 5).

The concept of "actors" is defined as "all organized social entities with a stake in sugar cane agriculture, which can be considered to have some interest with respect to, and some influence on choice of technique in this sector" (p. 13). The "actor" concept is then related to the concept of "social carriers of techniques" which is described as "a social entity which chooses and implements a technique; it "carries" into society" (p. 77). "To be chosen and implemented", in a specific context or situation, the author contends that "the techniques must, of course, actually exist somewhere in the world, i.e. it must be "on the shelf" (p. 77). Six conditions attached to this "social carrier" concept include: aspects of interest in choosing a technique, organization, economic and political power, infor-

mation about the existence of the techniques, access to the techniques, and knowledge about how to "operate, maintain, and repair the technique" (p. 77).

The author should be commended for undertaking the very difficult task of attempting to shed some light on the very complex/interdisciplinary subject of the "driving forces behind and the effect of technical change" (p. 3). He has made a noble effort in presenting numerical data (whose base, as admitted by the author on page xii, is "somewhat weak in certain places") together with the socio-economic and political ramifications of sugar cane harvesting and loading "techniques" related to Cuba and Jamaica. His thesis, however, tends to be bogged down and blurred because of the manner in which he presents his arguments. Too many repetitions of statements occur in this book together with the presentation of overlapping numerical data in prose form. This approach confuses, rather than elucidates, the concepts the author is attempting to interrelate. Also, along with the data presented in this manner, the citing of sources in the same sentence with names and dates is very distracting to say the least. Why not footnote these sources? Likewise it would have been very useful to have included some diagrams and/or photographs of the different kinds of harvesters and loaders discussed by the author.

The author's definition of "appropriate technology" is overly simplistic and projects a major distortion of this concept. It reveals an interesting technological bias. The implication that the "machete" is, in itself, an appropriate technology is a case in point. Appropriate Technology – to be appropriate – must encompass a variety of techniques and technologies – ranging from the simple to the complex, from labor-intensive (not necessarily "back breaking" work) to capital intensive technologies including mechanical harvesters, computers, and other "labor saving" systems – all related intimately to social, political, economic, and psychological implications. Does the author assume that there are no "techniques" available between the machete and the mechanical harvester to cut sugar cane? Other "techniques" can be developed which are more labor-intensive than the mechanical harvester but much less physically demanding than the machete and can serve to develop an infrastructure by which "high tech" can be sustained.

In discussing "actors" and "social carriers" of techniques he neglects to include a very powerful "actor" that seems to transcend all societies, capitalistic and socialist: the international banking system, specifically the IMF. Without the inclusion of this "actor", the author's analysis is weakened. Also as presented in this book, workers and unions seem to acquire the character of *reactors* rather than "actors". What roles have

these "entities" played in Cuba and Jamaica concerning the design-decision making process in creating new "techniques" for harvesting and loading sugar cane? Have workers and unions just been *confronted* by "techniques" developed by others (engineers, technicians, etc.) and have they reacted to these techniques in one form or another? If the appropriate technology approach had been taken here – where the technology is *by the people, for the people, and of the people*–, the results might have been more positive for both Cuba and Jamaica. Of course this implies and approaches a true socialism since efficiency here is measured in terms of the overall well-being of the human being – not in terms of "profits" and the traditional meaning of technical/economic "efficiency" defined in capitalistic terms. How does one measure "efficiency" when a society has 10%, 15%, 30% unemployment?

The author states on page 164 that "If modern techniques are not introduced in the Third World, these countries will continue to be left behind and the vicious circle of underdevelopment will continue to operate". In recent *New York Times* articles (January 13, 1985 and November 30, 1986) it was pointed out that the trend toward growing unemployment is worldwide and was taking place in "developed" as well as developing countries. What does this say about "modern techniques"? The social/political implications of *all* techniques must be examined carefully before we put complete faith in the "technological fix" approach to solving human problems.

In spite of the shortcomings of the presentation in this book the author has dealt with critical concepts and has attempted an interdisciplinary analysis of technical/social/economic/political issues which deserves further refining, clarification and development. His statement that "Technical change... cannot be handled only by engineers and technicians" (p. 172) is prophetic, but as a corollary, social scientists cannot fully comprehend technology without understanding the technological mentality of engineers and technicians (and vice-versa). So the "two cultures" somehow have to integrate their educational approaches and efforts more closely than heretofore – if humankind is to survive.

In the closing sentence of the book the author states "... democracy and grass-roots involvement in decision-making are also crucial for the effective development and application of advanced techniques with the objective of liberating mankind". This is what Appropriate Technology is all about!

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Women and social change in Latin America, JUNE NASH, HELEN SAFA and contributors. South Hadley, Mass.: Bergin and Garvey Publishers, 1986. 372 pp. (Cloth US\$ 34.95, Paper US\$ 16.95)

This collection of seventeen articles adds specific information to our knowledge of Third World women's economic contribution to both their families and their societies. Unfortunately, it does so incompletely and unevenly. The major problem with this volume is one which afflicts many collections of scholarly articles – the lack of an overall integrating theoretical perspective. Neither the single page editorial introductions to each of the five sections in the book, nor Nash's otherwise interesting first essay reviewing the decade's literature on the subject provides the needed integrative framework. The articles themselves – even when concerned with the same issue, e.g. Castro's article on Columbian women's migration to New York and Pessar's on Dominican Republic migration – neither refer to each other nor to the same literature. As a result, though this collection does provide extensive empirical data from largely anthropological case studies, it does not give the reader the sense that the basic issues and questions of women's relationship to social change in Third World countries have been adequately addressed or answered.

One theme which does recur in the collection is that capitalist penetration in the Third World has worsened women's condition there. This thesis – or a close variant of it – appears in several articles, and follows Bossen's statement that "both structurally and culturally, capitalism has brought about a redivision of labor which has relatively penalized women" (Bossen, 1984: 320, *The redivision of labor*, cited by Nash, p. 10). This is a very strong theoretical statement, and is potentially a useful and testable hypothesis. But in none of the articles in which it is presented is its validity subjected to careful empirical testing. To do so would mean documenting what women's lives were actually like before the onset of industrialization and comparing that to what life was like subsequent to that process. Furthermore, as these case studies show, the relationship of Latin American women to wage labor is quite different in various contexts. While Safa for example asserts that in Puerto Rico young women are preferred to men as workers in capitalist enterprises, Safiotti states that in Brazil women are displaced by men as technology advances, and Nash's review article asserts that women are not integrated into wage labor as subsistence and craft enterprises disappear. What is called for is an overall assessment of the meaning of these findings and a theoretical framework which is consistent with the data.

Nonetheless this volume does contain some important material in specific

articles. The crucial economic contributions of women to "family survival strategies" are illuminated by Schmink's discussion of Brazilian women. Babb's article on Andean marketwomen shows that the economic participation of women in the Third World often takes the form of marketing products which they had previously been producing only for domestic consumption. Babb points to the importance of both domestic and market production as valuable forms of women's economic contribution, but emphasizes that production for exchange brings with it the development of new and different skills.

The authors in this volume consistently – and correctly – note the absence of any evaluation of women's experience in most economic development literature, and view their work as a corrective to this serious omission. In their articles concerning agriculture, both Flora and Santos and Deere emphasize that land reform projects are most successful when women are explicitly included in the transformation process. Similarly, Pessar and Castro separately recognize that migration is experienced very differently by men and women. While their research leads them to contradictory conclusions concerning the impact of migration on women, they both agree that women often have a unique perspective on migration which is not captured by research on the "family" or husband's experience.

In their preface, Nash and Safa assert: "Scholars have passed beyond the descriptive phase of earlier studies. . . . The concern now is to use women's contributions as leverage for change in Latin America". Despite this injunction, however, the bulk of the material contained in this collection does not fulfill that promise. Though the book contains valuable information, in the end it did not teach me enough about how these broad socio-economic upheavals really benefit or hurt women. Nor did the volume sufficiently elucidate in what ways women are or might be able to take control of these changes occurring in their lives.

I am distressed to be forced to add a final note concerning the editing of this book. Typographical errors occur on almost every page and in some cases more than one is found on a single page. In addition, pages 362, 363 and 364 at the end of the volume are both wrongly numbered and in the wrong order. Needless to say, such sloppiness interferes with attention to the content of the book.

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Black labor on a white canal: Panama, 1904-1981. MICHAEL L. CONNIFF. Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1985. xv + 221 pp. (Cloth US\$ 24.95)

A changing public consciousness regarding the Panama Canal has been reflected in the voluminous material published about it throughout the twentieth century. During the U.S. construction effort of 1904 to 1914, and immediately thereafter, numerous books and magazine articles celebrated the technical achievements accompanying the creation of "The Big Ditch" and the heroism of coping with yellow fever and other tropical maladies. Contrast that exuberance with the newspaper and television reports of the angry "It's ours, we paid for it", rhetoric of the 1970s and the equally militant anti-American reactions from Panama and elsewhere in Latin America. Amidst the diffuse outpouring of information concerning the canal, academic work about it has been voluminous in its own right. Scholarly articles, books, and theses have tended to emphasize labor relations and the ethnic complexity that the construction decade left behind. And as the 1977 Carter-Torrijos treaty heads toward its conclusion in the year 2000, we can be certain that scholars will continue to assess the many ways in which the construction and presence of the canal have affected the peoples of Panama, the rest of the Caribbean region, and the Hemisphere.

Michael Conniff's *Black labor on a white canal* is a solid sociopolitical chronology of the West Indian "Zonians" in Panama, and his book represents some of the best Panama Canal scholarship yet to appear. He sees two interrelated subjects dominating his book: the settlement of an estimated 100,000 immigrant West Indians in the Canal Zone and Panama; and the tracing of U.S. labor policy in the zone up to the Treaty of 1977. Conniff's book also "compares race relations across several societies" (p. 7), including those of Panama and the United States. In researching the study, Conniff has consulted Canal records in the United States and Panama, newspapers from different periods, British Foreign Office correspondence in London, and archives in Barbados and Jamaica. He acknowledges a considerable intellectual debt to George Westerman, a Panamanian of Barbadian ancestry who was Panama's ambassador to the United Nations from 1956-1960, and who has shared with Conniff records and personal reminiscences about the progress of the transplanted West Indian community on the isthmus.

Conniff makes a number of telling points. The United States racism which, he asserts, "imprinted" the construction and operation of the canal for so long, was not because canal managers were from the U.S. South

as some have suggested. Perhaps more important were the self-preservation instincts of an entrenched white U.S. bureaucratic elite, northerners more than southerners, taking advantage of their relative isolation from Washington to perpetuate anachronistic race/labor policies in the Canal Zone long after such policies had been replaced by more enlightened practices in the continental United States. Conniff is particularly good at showing how the "gold" (white staff) and "silver" (black labor) wage classifications were manipulated to continue de facto racial segregation in the zone. Black West Indians initially found only limited support from native Panamanians who, until mid-century and beyond, considered them "British by loyalty, American by economic necessity, and Panamanian for expediency" (p. 139). Early on, the blacks took refuge in their own churches, voluntary associations, and especially their schools which they strived to improve but which served as a foundation for what the author terms a "West Indian Subculture". But as decades passed, important changes were occurring within the black "West Indian" population in Panama: although thousands of the original migrants from the West Indies had returned home or moved on to New York, the majority had stayed on the isthmus; and their children and grandchildren were learning Spanish, seeking their own niches in the local society, and would have been strangers had they gone back to the islands. In other words, they were well on their way to becoming Panamanians although not completely accepted by all others in Panama.

Integration of the black descendants of West Indian labor migrants into Panamanian society still is not complete in the 1980s, but, in Conniff's view, there have been marked improvements in their acceptance. He cites a number of positive signs, among them the insistence by key Panamanian politicians in the 1970s on using "Afro-Panamanian" to indicate those descending from West Indian migrants, a recent black Miss Panama, the rise of blacks in local politics. The predicted flood of West Indian descendants leaving Panama after the Treaty of 1977, moreover, has so far been only a trickle. In his overall assessment of the integration of West Indian blacks into Panamanian society, Conniff is bold enough to eschew gloomy predictions and states that in 1977, "Racial tolerance after the treaty stood at an all-time high" (p. 7). He goes on to suggest that for the near future "most indications are positive".

If there is a weakness in Conniff's book, it is the absence of grassroots descriptions of, for example, what it must have been like for recent arrivals from the West Indies to inhabit shacks, tents, and barracks in the early twentieth century or what ten-hour working days really entailed. Conniff mentions individuals, but they are almost invariably political leaders or

similar decision-makers rather than the rank and file whose recollections might have enlivened the study. A similar example from a later period: the author mentions briefly the 1964 "flag riots" which lasted several days, claimed twenty-four lives, and "proved a turning point in U.S.-Panamanian relations" (p. 145), and he then immediately discusses subsequent negotiations. Where, specifically, in Panama City were the riots? Who participated? And do the participants or sympathizers today recall the event as a spontaneous outburst or as a calculated measure to force negotiations? Without a great deal of difficulty, Conniff may have been able to glean insight through personal recollections that might have carried his analysis – of the riots as well as other events – beyond what he has found in conventional archival sources.

But it is perhaps unfair to quibble over methodology, especially when Conniff already has written a fine book describing the path along which progress in Panamanian race relations has come about. The lesson he teaches is that, in at least one case, genuine improvements in a potentially explosive situation have come about, not all at once but after painstaking and continuous efforts and with patience and good will exhibited by representatives from all sides. His book might be required reading for those who would solve complex contemporary problems by the seemingly simple "sending back" of targeted ethnic groups – whether they be Afro-Panamanians, black Britons, Israelis, or Afrikaners – to places where they really no longer belong.

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Caribbean ethnicity revisited. A special edition of Ethnic Groups, International periodical of ethnic studies, STEPHEN GLAZIER (ed.). New York, London, Paris, Montreux, Tokyo: Gordon Breach Science Publishers, 1985. 164 pp. (Paper US\$ 25.00)

With one exception, all the essays in this special edition of *Ethnic Groups* aim to detail the changing significance of racial and cultural differentiation in one or more Caribbean societies during a specific historical period. Duany compares the incorporation of European and African "immigrants" in Cuba and Puerto Rico between 1750 and about 1880, a period during which both societies experienced a reexpansion of plantation slavery. De Albuquerque and McElroy examine changes in the pattern of race relations

in the U.S. Virgin Islands following the transfer of the islands from Denmark to the United States in 1917. Shaw examines the differential maintenance and use of Chinese ethnicity in the British West Indies—Trinidad; Jamaica and Guyana, to be precise—between 1850 and 1950. Brockmann examines patterns of ethnic participation in the economic development of the Orange Walk region of Belize between 1966 and 1973. Layng, the one exception to this historical approach, concentrates on contemporary Dominica, exploring the relations between the Dominican Caribs' claim to an ethnic identity and the legal designation of reservation land for Caribs.

A major strength of most of the essays lies in their effort to disprove contentions that 1) the societies of the Caribbean region had achieved racial and cultural harmony prior to the independence movements of the 1950s and 1960s; 2) cultural differentiation is a "primordial given" and, 3) any pure cultural pluralism model can provide an adequate explanation for processes of ethnic and racial differentiation, interaction, or integration. Against these contentions, most of the essays present data that underscore the roles variation in modes of production, the division of labor, and consequent class stratification, play in the development of ethnic and racial segmentation and the ways group consciousness of these segmentations influence uses of distinctive identities in economic and political competition.

Unfortunately, as they confront these contentions they fail to question other equally problematic definitions of race, ethnicity, and political competition. For example, Duany, de Albuquerque and McElroy; Shaw, and Layng all seem to assume that some minimal physical and cultural distinctiveness is necessary for "real" racial and ethnic segmentation to develop. Hence, Duany argues that,

the diversified peasant economy which characterized Cuba, Puerto Rico and Santo Domingo before 1750 favored the constant assimilation of colored people into the white sector and the rapid growth of a fundamentally hybrid, mulatto society. The general poverty and stagnation of the islands socially equalized the majority of the settlers, preventing the formation of the two-class racial structure typical of plantation societies. A stratification system could not be founded on the clear-cut opposition between "racial" group, one Negroid, One [sic] Caucasian, *if only because a large sector of the population was genetically intermixed* [my emphasis, p.17].

De Albuquerque and McElroy, explaining what they refer to as the West Indian emphasis on color rather than race, argue in a similar vein when they contend that,

historically, color has assumed more significance than race in the USVI because the subtleties of color permitted the development of a more extensive status system and prevented the polarization that develops when race is an ascriptor of status. As in other West Indian islands, *it was the existence of a population of mixed blood that made the latter unworkable* [my emphasis, p. 45].

On the same point, Shaw hedges his bets. He takes a position between the assumption of race as empirically given pure type and its ethnographic contradiction when he connects race and ethnicity by noting that ethnic groups can exist despite interracial marriage and the proliferation of mixed types, while concluding that this is only possible when ethnicity is not derived from the physical characteristics he associates with racial distinctions (p. 99).

To find these assumptions tenable (in addition to the need to ignore the political and symbolic significance of the direction of assimilation in Duany's case and the relation between the subtleties of color and the hierarchy of status in the case of de Albuquerque and McElroy) one would also have to assume, contrary to much historical and ethnographic data, that there are mutually exclusive sets of physical characteristics that distinguish "races" as empirically given biogenetic types, and that where such pure types do not exist (or are not numerically predominant) the potential for ideological constructions of racial distinctiveness also cease to exist.

It is this unfortunate combination of assumptions that allows de Albuquerque and McElroy to speak of an emphasis on "color" rather than "race" as if strata based on skin color distinctions are not also strata based on ideological conceptions of race. It also this combination of assumptions which allows Duany to imply that had the movement toward a "fundamentally hybrid" population reached fruition it would have prevented the construction of a clear-cut opposition between racial groups, as if where such oppositions developed they were based on objectively pure segments rather ideologically constructed boundaries.

If we are well-advised, as a majority of the essayists suggest, to treat ethnicity as a socially and ideologically constituted phenomenon, the meaning and consequences of which varies with changing socioeconomic and political circumstances, then we must also, as Klass points out in his commentary which follows the essays, be prepared to treat such related concepts as race and minority in a similar manner. Attention must be paid, as Glazier notes in his introduction, to the symbolic construction of both physical and cultural characteristics.

The dangers of ignoring such issues are especially well exemplified in Layng's treatment of Dominican Carib ethnicity. Unable to find any physically distinguishing markers of Carib racial identity—"few of them appear to be pure Amerindian" (p. 128)—he concludes, for the Caribs, that they are not a race. Unable to identify a distinctive cultural inventory, he concludes, for the Caribs, that they are not an ethnic group. Insinuating, with little apparent concern for documentation, that their claims of human

rights violations are unfounded, he also concludes for them that they are not a persecuted minority. Instead, he tells us they are a "territorial minority" whose quest for a distinctive identity will cease if the economic advantages associated with rights in reservation land are eliminated.

Although Layng's essays seems to suffer most from the weaknesses of pre-Barthian approaches to ethnicity, it shares with the other essays another weakness associated with assimilationist approaches to race and cultural diversity. That is, it assumes, as Glick points out in his epilogue to the edition, that a nationalist identity will and should triumph over any and all other less encompassing identities, making inevitable the assimilation and the eventual disappearance of all minorities into a majority population, even when the existence of such a majority is questionable. Consistent with these assumptions, it is also expected that economic differentiation determines the speed with which this assimilation takes place. Discrimination and segregation make boundary maintenance economically and politically advantageous, at the same time it retards the formation of a physically hybrid culturally syncretized population and society. This set of assimilationist assumptions encourages, as Klass notes, a view of ethnic groups as objects acted upon, occasionally reacting but rarely creating key social forces.

In combination such assumptions result in an absence of concern by the essayists in this volume with non-economic factors which might encourage ethnogenesis or an interest in the maintenance of ethnic boundaries where such are not demonstrably linked to an economic advantage. In the quest for links between race and class, they fail to systematically consider the possibility that cultural boundaries, even those initially created for economic reasons or the distinctiveness of which were generated out of variations in the economic structure, may well be maintained as part of an effort to "...escape from a position of marginality rooted in history and culture..." (Glick, p. 159).

Hence, as Glick also notes, it becomes useful to consider the possibility that under these conditions political competition among groups sharing a territory may be focused on defining or redefining the relation between national identity and subnational identities. That these essays pay little attention to this possibility is most unfortunate because a careful historical analysis of the range and variety of motivations and ideological matrices hidden in the rubric of "Caribbean ethnicity" would no doubt provide a valuable contribution to the anthropology of subnational identity formation and its political consequences.

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Die Karibik; zur Geschichte, Politik und Kultur einer Region. FRAUKE GEWECKE, Frankfurt/M: Verlag Klaus Dieter Vervuert 1984. 165 pp.

According to the cover text, this book offers "a cohesive introduction to the history, politics and culture of this region, which in spite of the sharp geographical and political fragmentation and the variety of languages presents the image of a relatively uniform culture area" [my translation]. It is best to state from the start that the book does not live up to the expectations aroused here. Scores of English, Spanish and French publications discuss the same subjects at greater depth and with greater consistency. On the other hand, up to now no general introductions have been available in the German language. Even if this book does not provide new insights for scholars working in the Caribbean, it may consequently be useful in helping a German-reading audience to get to know the Caribbean.

In my opinion, however, *Die Karibik* has serious shortcomings. The book falls into two very uncohesive parts. In the first part Gewecke briefly reviews the history of the region, the bulk of this part being an overview of the contemporary situation. Caribbean culture, and particularly literature, are the subjects of part two. I will discuss the two parts separately before going on to make some general remarks.

The historical synopsis is useful, though sketchy and not without flaws. The early decimation of the Amerindian population, for instance, is attributed solely to exploitation and genocide, without any mention being made of the fatal consequences of European diseases (p. 4). To cite another example, Gewecke evinces little familiarity with the abundant literature on Maroon culture in her blunt statement that the Maroons paid a high price for their treaties with the various colonial authorities, viz. "loss of inner autonomy and vitality and – linked to this – loss of their own cultural identity" (p. 17, my translation).

The historical synopsis is followed by a review of the contemporary scene. The author rightly emphasizes the extremely limited opportunities for Caribbean governments to pursue an independent political course in view of the lingering colonial connections and the pervasive U.S. influence. The political situation of each Caribbean state or dependency is summarized, thus providing a useful overview for 1984 which is, however, already proving outdated after these few years. Here again, one is surprised by some of Gewecke's blunt statements. No evidence is presented for her assessment that in Cuba, as a consequence of "the aggressive attitude of the Reagan administration [...] the 'revolutionary fighting spirit' [...] has newly awakened" (p. 45, my translation). One is also surprised to

read that the supposed oil reserves around Aruba constitute the key reason for the island's separatism (pp. 57-8).

After discussing the role of the U.S. in the Caribbean in some detail, Gewecke surveys other countries with involvements in the Caribbean, and particularly their potential for counterbalancing U.S. influence. One is flabbergasted to read here about Canada, Venezuela, Mexico, Colombia, the European Community, the German Federal Republic, the United Kingdom, France and Spain, but nothing, not even a single word, about the U.S.S.R., whose influence in the region is obviously important, as Gewecke herself indicated when discussing Cuba.

The first part of this book concludes with an assessment of the economic and political problems facing the region, especially the dilemma defined as "regional solidarity versus national egoism". Gewecke explains the region's relatively low level of development as being a consequence of the heritage of colonialism, the absence of a strong political consciousness and of an effective political infrastructure, and "the key aspect [of] economic and political dependence" (p. 89, my translation). About the problems inherent in smallness of scale one does not find a word. We are only told about rich natural development potentials (excellent climatic and soil conditions, abundance of fish) as in an echo of the days of the "darlings of empire", "perla de las Antillas," etc.

In the second part of *Die Karibik* the author surveys Caribbean culture, mostly restricted here to literature. In fifty-odd pages one can hardly offer more than some guidance for a bibliographical orientation, as Gewecke herself states (p. 103). The orientation she offers is in itself interesting; the piles of books she mentions are not, however, to be found in the bibliography.

One main objection to the author's treatment of Caribbean literature is her consistent neglect of the Asian element in Caribbean society and culture. Heavy emphasis is laid on the "search for a lost [African] identity," as one of the chapters is entitled, and on the search for a Caribbean identity. One is surprised subsequently to read but one line about authors of East Indian descent like Samuel Selvon, Wilson Harris and V.S. Naipaul (p. 124).

The discussion of Hispanic (especially Cuban), English and French literature is obviously based on wide reading. It would have been appropriate for the author to give more attention to the many Caribbean writers "in exile", however. The survey of literature from the former Dutch Caribbean area (pp. 125-6) might just as well have been left out. I miss the names of most of the novelists I would have expected here (Colá Debrot, Albert Helman, René de Rooy, Frank Martinus Arion, Edgar Cairo, Bea

Vianen, Astrid Roemer, etc.), and find nothing about the remarkable Sranantongo poetry of the 1950s and 1960s. Gewecke apologizes for the conciseness of this overview by stating that there is hardly any primary or secondary literature available. This is simply not true: admittedly most of the relevant texts are in Dutch, but there are English anthologies of Dutch Caribbean literature available as well.

The final section is devoted to popular culture. As a form of cultural expression, Caribbean popular music reaches its Caribbean audience infinitely more effectively than literature, as Gewecke rightly states. She even proclaims calypso music to be the social consciousness of Trinidad, and reggae the alternative through which black Jamaicans may culturally emancipate. The singer Lord Laros is cited as an oracle here.

It will be clear that I believe this book to have many shortcomings as well as outright errors. In addition, it misses cohesion: the two parts read like two completely separate articles. It may serve well enough though as a first introduction to the region for a German-reading audience, to familiarize this (new) public with various facets of Caribbean politics and literature.

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